

Inclusionary practices in a Finnish pre-primary school context

Reko Niemelä

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pre-primary school context

*Academic Dissertation to be publicly discussed by due permission
of the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences at the University of
Helsinki, in Small Festive Hall of the university main building, on
Friday, 27th March 2015, at 13 o'clock*

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ISBN 978-951-51-0195-2 (nid)

ISBN 978-951-51-0196-9 (pdf)

ISSN 1799-2508

Unigrafia

2015

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Inklusiiviset käytänteet suomalaisessa esikoulukontekstissa

Tiivistelmä

Väitöskirja *Inklusiiviset käytänteet suomalaisessa esikoulukontekstissa* on tehty yhteistyössä EU-projekti Includ-Ed:in kanssa (2006–2011), jossa on yhteistyökumppaneina 14 eurooppalaista yliopistoa. Tutkimuksessa selvitetään, mitkä ovat eniten inklusiota tukevat ja eniten latistavat kasvatukselliset ja opetukselliset käytänteet eri agenttien (henkilöiden) kokemana. Agentteina ovat lapset, vanhemmat, opettajat, ja hallinnon ja organisaatioiden edustajat, joita haastateltiin kommunikatiivisella avoimella haastattelulla. Haastateltavia oli kaikkiaan 54. Inklusiota tarkastellaan transformatiivisen ja kriittisen kommunikaation näkökulmista. Kriittinen kommunikatiivinen metodologia olettaa, että ihmiset voivat itse kuvailla heidän käyttäytymistään ja voivat tämän perustella muuttaa käyttäytymismallejaan.

Haastattelut analysoitiin agenteittain ensin teoriasta johdetuilla kategorioilla. Tämän jälkeen muodostettiin kategorioita avointa luokittelua käyttäen. Tuloksissa voitiin erottaa yhteensä 212 viittausa ammattilaisiin (opettajat, hallinnon ja organisaatioiden edustajat) ja 88 viittausa kohdistuen vanhempiin ja lapsiin. Ammattilaiset toivat äänensä enemmän esille kuin vanhemmat ja erityisesti lapset. Ammattilaiset viestivät neljä kertaa enemmän inklusiota tukevia tekijöitä kun vanhemmat ja lapset. Vastaavasti vanhemmat ja lapset viestivät hieman enemmän inklusiota latistavia tekijöitä kuin ammattilaiset. Tuloksien valossa vanhemmat ja lapset eivät saa ääntään kuuluviin niin hyvin kuin olisi mahdollista, vanhempien oma asenne ja ennakkoluulot ovat myös inklusiota latistavia tekijöitä. Resurssien puute nousi esille ammattilaisten puolelta suurimpana inklusiota latistavana tekijänä. Kaikille agenteille tärkeimmiksi inklusiota tukeviksi tekijöiksi nousivat yhteistyö, tuki vähemmistöryhmille ja kannustaminen osallistumaan.

Avainsanat: inklusio, kasvatustiede, kriittinen kommunikatiivinen metodologia, sisällönanalyysi, agentit, ATLAS.ti

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Abstract

Doctoral dissertation *Inclusionary practices in a Finnish pre-primary school context* has been made in the context of the five-year EU project Includ-Ed (2006–2011), which has 14 European universities as partners. The aim of the research was to find out the most supportive practices and the most unsupportive practices from a perspective of inclusion experienced by agents (persons). Agents are children, parents, teachers and administration and organisation members who were interviewed by communicative open interview. There were a total of 54 interviews. Inclusion is examined through perspectives of transformation and critical communication. Critical communicative methodology assumes that people can interpret their own behaviour and modify their actions based on that.

To be able to analyse interviews, theory-based categories were used. After this, clusters were created using open categorisation. Of the results, when answering types are separated, 212 quotations were from professionals (teachers, administrators, members of organisations) whilst 88 quotations were from family and children. Professionals did make their voices heard more often than parents and children. Professionals gave over four times more transformative quotations than parents/children. Parents/children gave slightly more exclusionary quotations than professionals. In the light of research findings, parents and children are still unable to make their voices heard as well as they could, and parents' attitude and preconceptions are unsupportive of inclusion. Lack of resources was the most unsupportive practice to inclusion according to the professionals. For all the agents, the most supportive practice to inclusion was co-operation.

Keywords: inclusion, educational science, critical communicative methodology, content analysis, agents, ATLAS.ti

Summary

This study examines inclusive practices experienced by people who are agents in the Finnish pre-primary context. The main focus is on the viewpoints of different stakeholders, namely children (age group 5–6), parents, teachers, administration and organisation members. Interviews are made by communicative open-ended interviews (n=54). The data is large, and in order to be able to analyse it, the researcher has used a method where data is first reduced by predetermined selective categories. After this, clusters, here referred to as conceptual categories, were created. These were created by the researcher by repeatedly going through the material.

The theoretical framework of this research is based on an inclusive approach to education. The research is founded on a critical communicative methodology based on the research of Flecha & Gómez (2004). Critical communicative methodology is based on the assumption that people can interpret their own behaviour and modify their actions accordingly. Research as a whole belongs to the field of education science and my expertise and perspective also comes from education science.

The analysis method of this study can be seen as filtering. Predetermined selective categories are used as filters; that is, important aspects concerning inclusion according to previous studies are sorted out and then clustered. These clusters, called conceptual categories, are then analysed by answering types. The most important practices supporting (transformative) inclusion by agents and the most important practices unsupporting (exclusionary) inclusion by agents can be seen in the results.

Critical communicative methodology finds barriers to inclusion. As a methodological orientation it was effective in finding T (supportive to inclusion) and E (unsupportive to inclusion) dimensions. When the research question was to find supporting structures and barriers concerning inclusion, communicative open-ended interviews worked well. Interviews are communicative, as they represent a method where the interviewer has guideline topics, but the main goal is to encourage conversation and dialogue between the interviewer and the respondents. Content analysis is used when analysing interviews.

A critical communicative methodology approach towards interviews means that the interview will more likely take the form of exchanging experiences, the researcher bringing his/her knowledge to the interview situation. Because people can interpret their own behavior and modify their actions accordingly, the interview situation can introduce some new answers and ideas how to improve interviewees' lives. When the transcribed data is analysed sentence by sentence answers can be found which either support or do not support inclusion.

The analysis method worked well in reducing the material. No similar studies, to my knowledge, have been made in Finland in which the method involves analysing all the sentences (or sentences relating to a particular issue), at least not with this number of open-ended interviews as were analysed in this study.

The research data consisting of 54 interviews were first transcribed. They were then analysed using the ATLAS.ti programme, first with predetermined selective categories, then by conceptual categorisation, and finally the most transformative and most exclusionary practices for inclusion by agents are found. The main goal in analysing interviews is to use ATLAS.ti as “a family tree”, narrowing down from a variety of topics related to inclusion. This research uses content analysis. In the analysis of content data it is important that the material is first reduced, then clusters made, and finally the results can be concluded.

The analysis method worked well with the content analysis in reducing the material. The material was reduced from 1782 to 759 quotations and to the final result of 300 quotations. In the results, when answering types are separated, 212 quotations were from professionals (teachers, administration members, organisation members) as opposed to 88 quotations from family and children. Professionals often spoke more, so there was more transcribed material in the beginning. However, the differences in opinions between professionals and others are significant and cannot be explained merely by the amount of material. Professionals provided four times more transformative quotations than parents/children. Parents/children gave more exclusionary quotations than professionals, though the difference was slight. In the light of the research findings, parents and children are still unable to make their voices heard as well as they could.

To questions dealing with the support available for minority groups (immigrants, special needs pupils), teachers responded that support is readily available. Parents did not bring the matter up, and support for minority groups was not raised in their interviews. It can be concluded that either there is no support or parents do not want to talk about this matter. If support was readily available, it might be expected that this would be mentioned at some point in the interview, but this was not the case.

Qualitative research with a lot of material should always start from categorisation, and one of the main challenges of this study has been to display the summarised data. Data should also be displayed so that it can be understood. As Robson (2002, p.476) says, “you know what you display”. In this study, data has been displayed so that the reader can follow the route of summarisation. All the main categories are displayed and examples are given to present the types of quotations placed in each category.

Acknowledgements

Inclusion means that everyone has the right to get the same chance to learn and develop, and to achieve this challenge knowledge is needed. This study can hopefully bring some new knowledge to the issue.

This work would not have been possible without the help and support of many people, and I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all the parties who took part in this study. I would like to give special thanks to all the people who were interviewed for this study. This study was supported by a scholarship from the City of Helsinki, which I gratefully acknowledge. Also without the help of the EU project Includ-Ed this work would not have been completed.

Starting from the beginning of this study, I express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Professor Emeritus Mikko Ojala for his support and guidance throughout the study. I am grateful that I also had as supervisors Professor Arto Kalli-oniemi and Adjunct Professor Arniika Kuusisto. I also thank supervisor Professor Lasse Lipponen for his valuable suggestions, and Professor Heikki Ruismäki and Professor Emeritus Pertti Kansanen for their interest and advice concerning my study.

I am much indebted to the two reviewers of my thesis, Professor Marta Soler-Gallart and Professor Kirsti Karila. For linguistic help I am very thankful to Dr. Mark Shackleton and to Tim Glogan.

Many people have read my work as it progressed. I would like to thank Dr. Tuulikki Venninen and Jonna Leinonen and I would also like to extend a warm thank you to all the people who have worked on the EU project Includ-Ed.

Finally, a special thank you goes to my wife Satu, and to my sons Robert and Oskar, who have been patient in waiting for their father's "colouring book" to be finished. I also wish to thank my parents, who have always been supportive and have at all times had high expectations of their children. As I discuss in this study, one of the most important issues in preventing marginalisation is that all parties should have high expectations of each other.

Luumäki

November 2014

Reko Niemelä

Contents

1 Introduction	1
1.1 The importance of inclusion	3
1.2 Researcher's notes about the content	4
2 Literature Review	7
2.1 The main concepts and terminology as used in this study	7
2.2 Inclusion as a notion	8
2.2.1 Inclusive education in UNESCO's Salamanca Declaration	9
2.2.2 Inclusion as a right	9
2.3 Inclusive educational practices in Finland	10
2.3.1 Country-specific notes for this research	10
2.3.2 Early childhood education and inclusion in Finland	13
2.3.3 Piloting inclusion in early childhood education in Finland	14
2.4 Inclusive practice for children	16
2.4.1 Diversity and interaction	16
2.4.2 Inclusive practices for multilingual children	17
2.4.3 Practices in learning a foreign language	19
2.4.4 Multilingual framework with the maternal language	19
2.4.5 Inclusion of children with special education needs	20
2.5 Inclusive practice for families	21
2.5.1 Inclusive practices for family participation	21
2.5.2 Inclusive practices for family education	23
2.6 Inclusive practice for teachers	25
2.6.1 Diversity and diverse education practices	25
2.6.2 Pre-primary school promoting school success	27
2.6.3 Social inclusion at school	27
2.6.4 Teachers and inclusive practices	28
2.7 Inclusive practice for community/administration	30
2.7.1 Local practices for social inclusion	30
2.7.2 Respect for diversity and the learning environment	31
2.8 Theoretical framework	32
2.8.1 About the critical communicative approach	32
2.8.2 Transformative and exclusionary dimensions and a dual conception of reality	34
2.8.3 Social agents in inclusion	35
2.8.4 Reflections on the contextualisation of the study	37

3 Research questions	39
4 Methodology	41
4.1 Design of the study	41
4.1.1 Context	41
4.1.2 Participants	43
4.2 Gathering the Data	45
4.3 Ethical considerations of the study	47
4.4 Data analysis	47
4.4.1 Content analysis	47
4.4.2 Generally about the reduction of the data	49
4.4.3 Examples from data analysis and data reduction	52
4.4.4 Data analysis processes of this study presented in figures.....	55
4.4.5 Summary of the method	57
5 Results	59
5.1 Transformative practices by agents	61
5.1.1 Transformative practices: children.....	61
5.1.2 Transformative practices: the family/relatives	62
5.1.3 Transformative practices: teachers/the school	65
5.1.4 Transformative practices: administration/ the community	67
5.2 Exclusionary practices by agents	69
5.2.1 Exclusionary practices: children	69
5.2.2 Exclusionary practices: the family/relatives	70
5.2.3 Exclusionary practices: teachers/the school.....	72
5.2.4 Exclusionary practices: administration/the community	73
5.3 Analysis and summary of the findings.....	75
5.4 Discussion of the main findings.....	78
6 Conclusion	85
6.1 Considerations about the methodology.....	85
6.2 Data selection credibility	86
6.3 Data analysis credibility	88
6.4 The researcher's credibility.....	88
6.5 Recommendation for inclusive practice.....	90
References.....	93
Appendixes	101

Tables

Table 1. Summary of important concepts of inclusion	8
Table 2. Population according to language and foreign nationals in the period 1981–2009.....	11
Table 3. Population by mother tongue and according to country of birth in 2009.....	12
Table 4. Socio-economic summary of the pre-primary school district.....	42
Table 5. Interviewees 2008	43
Table 6. Interviewees 2009	44
Table 7. Conceptual categories 2008	59
Table 8. Conceptual categories 2009	60
Table 9. Quotation numbers from the results, divided by T and E	79

Figures

Figure 1. Different agents concerning inclusion.....	36
Figure 2. Process of inductive data analysis.....	53
Figure 3. Data selection from predetermined selective categories (up) to conceptual categories (down).....	54
Figure 4. Data analysis of the study.....	56
Figure 5. Progress of the study	57
Figure 6. Eight conceptual categories which received the most T and the most E quotations, categorised by agents.....	61
Figure 7. Structure of data selection	87

1 Introduction

It has been said that the Internet has introduced as many changes into society as electricity or the Industrial Revolution. The possibility to obtain and communicate information will no doubt reshape societies, changing attitudes towards inclusion to embrace global village thinking. Inclusion and respect for diversity will hopefully be the result. As Flecha (2009) says, increasing the amount of information can also change attitudes towards information. Thus, for example, parents will not merely settle for simple answers but will want to be given reasons (Flecha, 2009).

In this study, inclusion is studied by analysing people's (called 'social agents' or just 'agents' in this study) experiences about successful and unsuccessful inclusive practices. The definition of social agents comprehends all members of a community as agents (i.e. parents, children, teachers, administration members, community organisation members, etc.). The concept of agents has been discussed by several authors, including Beck (1992), Beck-Gernsheim, Butler & Puigvert (2003), Freire (1998), Giddens (1984), Habermas (1987), Sen (1999) and Willis (1977).

Inclusion can be understood in many ways. In this study inclusion is understood as a right and incorporates the notion that everybody has the same rights in society (Bernstein, 1996). To be able to transform society and make it more inclusive, it is important to know how different agents experience inclusive practices. Social agents and the importance of agency will be reviewed theoretically agent by agent. This study examines inclusive practices experienced in a Finnish context, and research data is drawn from different stakeholders in Finnish pre-primary schooling. The research context in Finland is multicultural; inclusive practices are generally in use, including in pre-primary education. If inclusive practices work effectively, many further problems can be avoided.

By seeing all members of society as agents who can affect each other, the importance of finding out how agents experience inclusive practices is implicitly understood. The interviews were communicative and followed a method in which the interviewer has guideline topics, but the main goal is to encourage conversation and dialogue between the interviewer and respondents. Content analysis was used when analysing the interviews.

Put simply, the analysis method of this study can be seen as filtering. Predetermined selective categories were used as a filter; quotations related to important aspects concerning inclusion according to previous studies were sorted out and were then clustered. These clusters, called conceptual categories, were then analysed according to answering types. The most important practices supporting (transformative) inclusion by agents and the most important practices not supporting (exclusionary) inclusion by agents can be seen in the results.

This study is made within the context of Project 6 of the Includ-Ed projects, which is a four-year follow-up study. Data from the two middle years of measurements collected from Finland have been used in this research.

The Includ-Ed project was an EU-funded project covering the period 2006–2011, which sought to demonstrate how inclusive school practices in national

learning projects can reduce inequalities and marginalisation in teaching and education and foster educational and social inclusion. The main focus in the Includ-Ed project was to analyse school systems and educational reforms as well as educational practices generating low rates of educational and social exclusion. A current issue in Europe is to find successful educational practices that guarantee both high achievement and good tolerance between social groups.

In the Finnish sub-project, the focus is on pre-primary education and community participation. Pre-primary education in this study means a one-year time period before primary school, so children interviewed for this study were 5–6 years old; professionals and parents who were connected in some way with pre-primary schooling were also interviewed. Pre-primary education plays a crucial role in preventing social and educational exclusion and fostering the pupil's long-term school success. Educational strategies and practices that, on the one hand, can contribute to social and educational exclusion and, on the other hand, when providing key educational strategies and actions, can lead to social and educational inclusion, have been studied by the Includ-Ed project (INCLUD-ED, 2007).

In order to achieve this goal, the Includ-Ed project has identified educational strategies that can contribute to overcoming inequalities and promoting social cohesion, particularly focusing on vulnerable and marginalised groups. In this task, the Includ-Ed project has focused on interactions between the educational system, agents and policies. In the educational system, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, as well as special education and vocational training, have been focused on. Members of society, including children, young people and families as well as teachers, administrators and policy-makers were defined as educational agents (INCLUD-ED, 2007).

The Includ-Ed project found the following features critically important for inclusion: community involvement, family and community education, participation in decision-making processes in school, participation in the curriculum and in evaluation, participation in classrooms and learning spaces (in some European countries, it is common for parents to participate in teaching) (INCLUD-ED 2009). My study has expanded the international findings of the Includ-Ed project into the Finnish context, and has focused in particular on the following items:

- 1) Theoretical background. Seeing inclusion as a means to transform through the experiences of social agents. Inclusive practices by different agents are analysed in a Finnish context.
- 2) Method. Analysing all the transcribed material so that it gives a picture of how the quotations relate to each other. More detailed analysis, with the information narrowed down three times, firstly by selective predetermined categories, secondly by conceptual categorisation, and thirdly the results from the conceptual categorisations are analysed according to agents (children, teachers, administration members, and community organisation members).
- 3) Results. This study provides an answer to the question of how knowledge about inclusion according to agents can be beneficial especially to Finnish

society. The conclusion looks at how the different roles of agents (agents' pre-understanding) affect dialogue.

1.1 The importance of inclusion

In this research, all community members are understood as agents. The concept of community members as agents is introduced by several researchers, such as Sen (1999) and Habermas (1987). Important matters include what kind of impact can the actions of an agent like a teacher have on other agents such as pupils and families. In today's society where economic factors play a key role in everything, education is always related to the socio-economical culture. Because there is no such thing as unlimited resources, it is important to know the benefit of the actions of different agents.

In today's world, the perception of information has changed. Earlier, information was difficult to obtain and was not available to everyone. Nowadays, a large quantity of information is accessible to every member of society. This also changes parents' understanding of knowledge. Flecha (2009) finds that people want explanations. They do not settle for mere answers, but want to know the reasons, for example from a doctor, why the diagnosis is what it is. All this requires dialogue (Flecha, 2009).

Teachers in today's global village should have a sense of community and a belief in pupil achievements in order to solve problems in a multicultural school. Communal knowledge and global responsibility are part of a teacher's expanded professionalism in a multicultural school (Talib, 2005).

The inclusion of people (not only pupils) in classrooms recognises minority groups and their identities. For society, this inclusion is a key factor in helping to overcome the stereotypes and prejudices which exist in communities. In the school environment as a whole, it is important to have the participation of all community members—pupils, teachers, administrators and parents—in order to achieve the goal of detecting, preventing and intervening in violent relationships (Meraviglia & Becker, 2003; Orfield, 2000).

Respect for diversity covers many aspects like gender, a pupils' cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, educational and curricular strategies and children's grouping. The aim of a pedagogy which embraces diversity is to combine social and educational approaches to help socially excluded members of society (Bennet, Bettens & Buysse, 2007). Educational equality is reached when all children have the same opportunity to acquire knowledge and when their cultural and religious identities are acknowledged in school (Castells, Freire, Flecha, Giroux, Macedo & Willis, 1999).

An inclusive school values diversity. Similarities and differences can be complementary. When diverse talents and skills meet the needs of others, diversity becomes an accepted and necessary part of the community. As a result, everyone is recognised for his or her uniqueness. The development of an inclusive school is the next logical step in the process of schooling (Boscardin & Jacobson, 1997). A pupil's school success is influenced by interaction with all community members like

teachers, families, school principals, administrators, interest groups, peers and others involved in their education. Therefore, the pupil's performance will improve by increasing the educational level of all the community members in his/her environment through inclusive practices, such as family and community education, participation in the decision-making processes, involvement in the development of the curriculum, and families and community participating in the learning spaces (Gutiérrez & Niemelä, 2010). In educational practice, this approach concentrates on interaction not only between pupils and teachers but also between all community members—peers, parents, school principals, administrators, interest groups, etc. This type of approach is in many ways connected to the pedagogical ideas of Freire (1998) and Vygotsky (1978).

Furman states that it is not individuals but the community that works to establish links between moral actions and practice. The moral responsibility to participate in community processes is a principle for educators of ethics (Furman, 2004). According to Heynemann (2004), one of the most persistent generalisations concerning influences on academic achievement or school performance has been that the influence of the home has been greater than the influence of the school itself. The degree of this influence carried across nations showed that the lower a nation's gross domestic product, the more influence the school seemed to have, so the influence of school should not be underestimated (Heynemann, 2004).

The British study *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion* (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006), provides research questions like when and how do improvements in school become inclusive development, how can inclusive school development be supported, and what policies promote inclusion and what policies undermine it. The goal in Ainscow et al. (2006) was to find out how inclusion is talked about by different people: "We felt it was important within our research to find out more about how policy makers, local authority staff and teachers in schools talked about inclusion. However, in order to be able to assess and comment on the extent to which inclusion was occurring in the schools we had to decide how we thought the term should be used" (Ainscow et al., 2006, p. 14). Such questions and approaches are similar to those of my own research.

1.2 Researcher's notes about the content

In this study, inclusion is understood as a right (Bernstein, 1996); it is seen as a way to participate in a community's pre-primary education. In Finland, little research has been carried out about how effective inclusive practices are and what kind of inclusive practices are in use. Inclusion as a topic has been under discussion for a long time. Inclusion has been understood as the deepest level of integration, and also as a right. Often, inclusion enters the discussion when dealing with topics related to special education, and here too inclusion is seen as a right—the right to receive the same level of education as everybody else does.

When reading up the theoretical background to this study I did not find many examples about successful inclusive practices. As a teacher, I wanted with this study to collect together inclusive practices used in Finland in educational contexts

where inclusive practices have been used for a long time. The aim is to provide examples of what can be done and how individuals experience inclusive practices. Inclusion is always interaction with other people.

The following presents inclusive practices according to previous studies and according to the individuals (called agents in this study) who were participants in this study. The topics selected are important to the successful inclusion: first, country-specific notes are presented and then important aspects concerning inclusion agent by agent.

The context of this study is Finnish pre-primary school and people who are interfering with this context. Inclusion is described in a multicultural context, not in the context of special education (section 2.4.5 discusses special education). The multicultural context has such important aspects as language, cooperation with the family and respect for diversity. The theoretical background is provided by Habermas and Freire. The primary research question is to uncover successful and unsuccessful inclusive practices according to the agents.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The main concepts and terminology as used in this study

Table 1 highlights some key concepts used in this study. Everybody has the same rights in a society and that is why inclusion is understood as a right. Inclusion requires transformation, which means that attitudes will change towards positive thinking. Transformation is realised by several authors, as seen in Table 1. Transformation plays a key role in successful inclusion, and to be able to support inclusion there must be knowledge about how transformation happens.

This study aims to uncover transformative practices and to be able to do this, exclusionary practices, i.e. practices that do not support inclusion, must also be found. In this study, all the people in the community are understood as agents. This means that people influence each other and transmit transformative or exclusionary practices. Also, for agents themselves, it is important to know which practices are transformative and which are exclusionary.

Practices can be seen as ways of action which can be identified. In this study, 54 agents were interviewed and from these interviews, by analysing all the sentences in the interviews, transformative and exclusionary practices were identified. Subsequently, the most frequently mentioned practices were fed into the results of the study. Because many authors like Freire and Habermas (see Table 1) believe that everybody has communicative language skills and communication and understanding can lead to inclusion, this study's interviews were set up as communicative interviews in which the interview situation closely resembled normal conversation. This study also considers that people themselves are the best experts to describe their own situation.

Table 1. Summary of important concepts of inclusion

Author	Important concepts	Author's quotation
Bernstein (1996)	<i>inclusion as a right</i>	Inclusion as a right. This right is the condition for confidence, the right to be included, socially, intellectually, culturally and personally.
Flecha & Gómez (2004) Freire (1970) Habermas (1987) Le Compte, Millroy, Preissle (1992)	<i>transformation</i>	Transformation plays a key position in critical communicative methodology. It is noted that the transformative dimension is defined through the exclusionary dimension, and vice versa. They define each other. In other words, there can be no good without evil. It is important to know which support (transformative) and which do not support (exclusionary) inclusion.
Beck (1992) Beck-Gernsheim, Butler & Puigvert (2003) Freire (1998) Giddens (1984) Habermas (1987) Willis (1977)	<i>agents</i>	It is recognised by many authors that in society there are not only structures but also agents . These agents play a very important role in preventing exclusion. Without these agents, there is no inclusion.
Freire (1970)	<i>understanding actions that lead to inclusion</i>	In communicative research, the aim is to understand actions and practices that lead to inclusion .
Habermas (1987)	<i>communication skills</i>	Everyone has communicative language skills . All people have the ability to communicate and interact with others. Language and action are inherent capabilities we all have and are therefore universal attributes.

2.2 Inclusion as a notion

Inclusion thinking is based on human rights and on educational and social equality. These objectives have been the main goal from the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1998). The history of inclusion can be seen to date back to the Magna Carta in 1215, embraces notions found in key documents from the eighteenth century, such as the Declaration of the Rights of Man in France, and the United States Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. In more recent times we have the UN international human rights documents, which are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These statements and documents are developed and shaped by each period's philosophical standards, although the goal has always been to develop human rights and gender equality for all. Important modifications to these documents are the 1975 Disability Rights Declaration, which calls for people with disabilities to have the right to a normal, decent life (Pöyhtäri, 2010).

Historically, inclusion means the human rights movement in the United States, which in the 1950s worked towards the right for black and white children to attend the same school. The 1960s and 1970s saw improvements in the rights of mental health patients, and in the 1980s the right for disabled children to attend standard

schools was promoted. Since the 1990s, the inclusive movement in the United States has meant that disabled children are permitted to go to neighbourhood schools, having the right to be taught in the same social community as other children of their own age (Ware, 1998).

From the disability movement of the 1970s, rose a way of thinking which emphasized a person's right to belong to the community, a right which the individual did not have to earn. A disabled person is entitled to services where ever he/she wants to be. This way of thinking is known from the early 1990s as inclusion. The term itself has become standard in The American Association for the Severely Handicapped. Inclusion rather than integration has become the preferred term (Saloviita, 2012).

2.2.1 Inclusive education in UNESCO's Salamanca Declaration

The concept of inclusion became known from UNESCO's Salamanca Declaration in 1994, a product of UNESCO's special education target program. UNESCO and the UN had used the term integration for decades but started using the term inclusion from 1994 onwards. By using this new term they wished to highlight the idea of an open society for everyone. The difference between integration and inclusion is that the latter does not imply limitations: the implication of 'inclusion' is that if special support is needed it will be given, so all can interact and share in activities aimed at everyone (UNESCO, 1994).

According to the Salamanca Declaration, inclusive education means a place of learning that accepts all children into mainstream classes, i.e. all the children are taught together. Teaching is conducted with appropriate supportive measures, ensuring that pupils with disabilities are recognized as members of the community. The principles of the Salamanca Declaration were reaffirmed in 2000 in Dakar at the International Forum. The World Bank supports inclusive education projects. The same position was taken by the OECD. In Finland, the education administration has used the concept of inclusion as a broad synonym for Special Education, and the original meaning of the right for disabled children to attend ordinary classes has been lost (Pöyhtäri, 2010; Saloviita, 2012).

2.2.2 Inclusion as a right

The philosophy behind inclusion is opposed to the practice of segregation. Often inclusion is seen as a practice in special education, but it includes education for all children regardless of differences, disabilities or ethnic background. Saloviita (2012) highlights that the term inclusion has been adapted to political use, and, at the same time, inclusion has widened its meaning by bringing out the idea of the rights of different groups to participate in all the activities equally provided by the society. Inclusive education involves creating ways to develop the learning environment in such a way that pupils with special needs, migrant students, and other potentially marginalised groups are able to study together (Murto, Naukkarinen & Saloviita, 2001).

Inclusion is described by UNESCO (2005) as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from and within education. It has been argued that schools and pedagogy have to respond positively to pupil diversity, and that individual differences need to be seen as opportunities for enriching learning.

Mel Ainscow was director of a UNESCO Teacher Education project on inclusive education, which involved research and development in over 80 countries. Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006) defines inclusion as an approach to education embodying particular values; it is concerned with all learners and with overcoming barriers to all forms of marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement. Their study is focused on when and how improvements in schools become inclusive development, and how inclusive school development can best be supported. In their study, inclusion was fundamentally about the specification of those values and how they can be put into action. The study developed ways of thinking about inclusion as follows:

1. Inclusion as a concern with disabled pupils and others categorised as having special educational needs.
2. Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion.
3. Inclusion in relation to all groups seen as vulnerable to exclusion.
4. Inclusion as developing the school for all.
5. Inclusion as education for all.
6. Inclusion as a principled approach to education and society.

(Ainscow et al., 2006).

In his discussion of inclusion as a right, Bernstein (1996) argues that this right is the condition for confidence, involving the right to be included socially, intellectually, culturally and personally. Bernstein, moreover, distinguishes inclusion from ‘absorption’.

2.3 Inclusive educational practices in Finland

2.3.1 Country-specific notes for this research

In this research, country-specific differences are taken into account when comparing results to other similar studies. In Finland, there are hardly any private schools (those that do exist require a license and will then receive government support), and tertiary education is also given free, so in this respect the financial background of families should have little bearing on academic success. One of the challenges for Finnish education today is immigrant pupils and pupils with special educational status. Finland has long been a homogeneous community, so classrooms with pupils from mixed cultural backgrounds is still often thought of as something new and may evoke prejudices. Table 2 shows the growth of the population in Finland, the increase in the number of foreign nationals and the prevalence of foreign languages.

Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish (Finnish Acts of Parliament, Language Act 423/2003). In 2010, there were 292 Finnish-speaking municipalities from a total of 342, 18 bilingual municipalities with Finnish as the majority language, 13 bilingual municipalities with Swedish as the majority language, and 19 Swedish-speaking municipalities. In addition, the Sámi language is spoken widely in the northern parts of Finland, Sweden and Norway, and Sámi is an official language in four municipalities of Finland (Finnish Acts of Parliament, Sámi Language Act 1086/2003; Statistics Finland 2010c; Statistics Finland 2010d).

According to Statistics Finland, foreign language is a more reliable indicator of cultural background than nationality, as a person may later obtain Finnish citizenship and still be a native speaker of another language. As can be seen from Table 2, in 1989 the number of people in Finland speaking “other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami” as their mother tongue was 19,488, and in 2009 it was ten times greater. Thus, the Finnish school system has faced quite a challenge within the last twenty years, and it still has much to do to face the challenges of multicultural teaching. These challenges are in the process of being met as, for example, in recent years the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Helsinki has been developing multicultural education (Statistics Finland, 2010a).

Table 2. Population according to language and foreign nationals in the period 1981–2009 (Statistics Finland, 2010a.)

	Population	Finnish	Swedish	Sámi	Foreign language	Foreign Nationals
Year:						
1984	4893748	4580218	299661	1678	12191	16765
1989	4974383	4656325	296840	1730	19488	21174
1994	5098754	4742387	295182	1726	59459	62012
1999	5171302	4783224	292439	1690	93949	87680
2004	5236611	4811945	289751	1732	133183	108346
2009	5351427	4852209	290392	1789	207037	155705

Most of these people other than the Finnish, Swedish or Sami -speaking population are found in the capital region, and the largest group there today are Russians (see Table 3). The distribution of mother tongues shown in Table 3 is very similar to that in the pre-primary school case study. It should be noted that the ten most spoken languages in the world in 2001 in terms of number of mother tongue speakers were Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, English, Bengali, Portuguese, Arabic, Russian, Japanese and German. However, 50% of the global population speaks a language other than these mega-languages. There are 6,000–7,000 spoken languages in the world and over 80% of these are endemic (i.e., exist in one country only) (Skutnabb-Kangas, Maffi & Harmon, 2003).

Table 3. Population by mother tongue and according to country of birth in 2009 (Statistics Finland, 2010b.)

Population by mother tongue in 2009	
Total	5351427
Finnish	4852209
Swedish	290392
Sámi	1789
Total foreign languages	207037
Russian	51683
Estonian	25096
English	12063
Somali	11681
Arabic	9682
Kurdish	7135
Chinese	7078
Albanian	6736
Vietnamese	5313
German	5276
Thai	5143
Turkish	5068
Persian	4548
Spanish	4252
French	2812
Polish	2686
Other	40785

Population according to country of birth 2009	
Total	5351427
Finland	5118244
Born abroad	233183
Former Soviet Union	47307
Sweden	30966
Estonia	21761
Russia	7339
Somalia	7110
China	6591
Iraq	6180
Thailand	6108
Former Yugoslavia	6074
Germany	5770
Turkey	4890
Britain	4367
Vietnam	4251
Iran	3924
United States	3907
India	3624
Poland	2602
Afghanistan	2342
Other	58070

In Finland, according to UNESCO, the adult literacy rate is 100% for Finnish and Swedish mother tongue speakers (UNESCO, 2008). According to the PISA results (OECD, 2010a), Finns are among the most literate nations in the world; Finland had excellent reading skills among girls, and boys also proved to have the highest reading scores in the OECD countries. As a result of remedial teaching in Finland, the number of pupils performing poorly was lower than in the other OECD countries (OECD, 2010b; Finnish National Board of Education, 2010b).

Finland has a long tradition in reading and writing, and has often emphasised the importance of the Lutheran Church in education and the public promotion of literacy in Finland. The Reformation and the Protestant ideology contained the idea of essential vernacular education, so in the 17th century enthusiastic bishops drove home the Christian idea of a basic education. In the following century, confessional school became the duty of every young person, but the literacy of every parishioner continued to be tested in the annual examination of skills in reading literacy and knowledge of the Catechism, the so-called “lukukinkerit”. The carrot and stick that the Church offered was efficient. Without confession you could not attend Communion, and without Communion you could not marry in a church. However, from

vernacular education during the Reformation and after to success in today's PISA, Finland has come a long way (Markkola, 2007).

General social practices supporting reading in Finland are, firstly, great respect for reading in Finnish culture. Parents read to their children at home, and literacy as the basis for further learning is widely accepted. The news media also plays a constructive role in creating good publicity for the promotion of reading and writing. Secondly, there is a large and dense network of libraries with a good collections of books and newspapers for the whole family, library staff are eager to promote literacy in co-operation with schools, and there are online links and internet access in most libraries. Thirdly, Finnish women read more than men, are often in salaried work outside the home, and have high educational attainment, so they act as important role models for girls. Fourthly, while watching television, children learn to read and develop the habit of quick reading because foreign films are provided with Finnish sub-titles rather than being dubbed. Fifthly, the leisure habits of the young today are internet surfing, text messaging and playing role games, which have all increased reading and writing, although it has decreased the reading of books (Finnish National Board of Education, 2010b).

2.3.2 Early childhood education and inclusion in Finland

In Finnish early childhood education, multicultural education is on the curriculum, but as Paavola (2007) has stated, in practice multicultural education is related only to ethnic minority groups and performed by people other than pre-primary school personnel, such as language teachers. Grouping and streaming practices are aimed at minorities in many cases, not only by ability but also by other measures such as special remedial groups (Paavola, 2007). Finland is the only country in the Nordic countries where pre-primary school and early childhood education is a subjective right, meaning that every child has the right to pre-primary school and early childhood education (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2007).

Integration has been a leading idea for a long time in Finland, where it has been seen as the opposite of segregation. Children with special needs have been able to take part in activities designed for all children. Integration has moved towards inclusion, where the idea of integration has been taken further. With inclusion, everybody has the same right. The overall attitude should be positive and tolerant, and professionals at pre-primary school should have knowledge about inclusion. Pihlaja and Kontu (2006) argue that successful inclusion means that the child is in the right group for him/her and that professionals have knowledge about inclusion and that extra resources can be supplied when needed. Management has to evaluate inclusion and maintain a positive atmosphere (Pihlaja & Kontu, 2006).

Lappalainen (2006) reported that experienced professionals in day care centers did not find prejudice in terms of nationality, ethnicity, class or gender among children in Finnish schools. However, professionals found children with immigrant background experienced exclusion at school, which were mainly explained by children's undeveloped social skills.

Inclusion is facing challenges in everyday life at pre-primary school and in primary and secondary education. Management has an important role to play in

successful inclusion. In Finland professionals working at pre-primary school have a different educational background, some have education as a pre-primary school professional and some as early childhood teachers. In every group of children (about 15–20), there should be three adults and at least one of them should be an early childhood education teacher. Sometimes different educational backgrounds can cause difficulties in feedback situations, as sometimes there are hierarchies between professionals which can make it difficult to make adjustments to working culture at pre-primary school (e.g. Venninen, 2007).

2.3.3 Piloting inclusion in early childhood education in Finland

During 2001–2004, the City of Helsinki activated several early intervention projects. The aim of these projects was to create methods for positive early intervention in early childhood education in neighbourhoods which presented possible risks for child development (Tapola, 2003). Certain pre-primary schools were targeted in districts with greater risks of failure at school. The focus groups involved encompassed families, children under 7, immigrants, sub-teens and personnel working with children (Tapola, 2003).

In these early projects, intensive family support was offered to children and parents to try to integrate them into care and education at pre-primary school centres. Parents were encouraged to talk about their own and family situations. Support and consultation directed at pre-primary school personnel also proved to be important. The projects developed tools for early intervention and support involving concrete methods which helped personnel to work with families and give them ideas when bringing up difficult subjects (Tapola, 2003).

Knowledge of different cultures

In *the Kallahti Pre-primary School Project* (Tsempoi, Salah & Huhtiniemi-Anttonen, 2005), the mother tongue and culture of immigrant children were supported, helping the children to learn Finnish in pre-primary school and at school. Parents were encouraged to understand the importance of the mother tongue, and that a good knowledge of the mother tongue is the key to learning new languages. As a result, the knowledge of mother tongues as well as the identity and social interaction of immigrant children was strengthened by the project. The project also made collaboration between parents and personnel much easier; mutual trust was created by acquiring a better knowledge of different cultures and by using interpreters to assist in discussions with parents (Tsempoi et al., 2005).

Therapeutic support for families

The *Myllypuro Early Intervention Project* (Komulainen & Päivinen-Niiranen, 2005) aimed to create a ‘low threshold’, a form of preventive mental support in the service system of children’s families. The purpose was to provide families with free therapeutic support and conversational therapy for different life situations, such as questions and problematic situations related to parenthood, upbringing, family life and relationship between parents. The staff of the pre-primary school

was offered consultation through work supervision and training. As a result, the project showed that therapeutic family sessions are necessary and this kind of preventive work would be appropriate in pre-primary schools (Komulainen & Päivinen-Niiranen, 2005).

Support earlier and faster

In the *Itä-Pasila Early Intervention Project* (Mattila, 2004), the strategy of early intervention and support was developed, used work methods described, and the effectiveness of used methods evaluated. The essential aims of the project were, firstly, to identify families that needed early support, secondly, to find methods for broaching a difficult subject with families, thirdly, to identify services that families required, and fourthly, to find out what effects and consequences all the services on offer had for families (Mattila, 2004).

The work orientation towards early intervention and support was learned by co-operating with partners. The project was implemented by working in a network, immediately talking about concerns with parents, well-timed help and support for families, working methods that were based on customers' needs, and meeting and listening to customers. As a result, with the pre-primary school's family work it was possible to help and support families at an early stage, which would not have been possible otherwise within the sphere of family work. The family worker's greater attention to the child's care discussions and educational discussions increased early intervention and support (Mattila, 2004).

Family worker as a partner

The Kieku Family Work Project (Kaukoluoto, 2005) tried to improve young children's educational and growth environments. The main attention was to the practices of the family worker, namely the trained professionals whose job it is to discuss with families matters to do with pre-primary education. The starting point was that the family worker should play an important role as a partner and a supporter of a child's parents and the staff of the pre-primary school. As a result, the project improved the children's welfare, supported parenthood, improved work communities and co-operation in networks and also improved the welfare of personnel (Kaukoluoto, 2005).

Through education, functional methods, art and experiences, the personnel of the pre-primary school learned to meet and better understand the children and their families. Furthermore, the personnel learned to utilise the network through working with children in challenging family situations. Different activities were arranged for children through functional methods and art experiences. Parents gained support from family workers who co-operated with the staff of the pre-primary school to break the problematic cycles of families (Kaukoluoto, 2005).

Children as individuals

The Kontula Early Intervention Project (Monto & Simojoki-Tavi, 2005) had four themes: firstly, training and supervision of pre-primary school personnel, secondly,

identification of children's early support, thirdly, developing co-operation with parents, and fourthly, developing a multi-vocational network. As a result, the project shows that personnel working in pre-primary school need support in analysing their own work, and that working skills improve through consultation. Positive changes in pedagogical work were also found: people learned to see children as individuals and activities were carried out in small groups (Monto & Simojoki-Tavi, 2005).

Another significant result was that the family work services provided through pre-primary school were regarded as useful by parents. The project also showed that early support and intervention in pre-primary school is possible if resistance to these new changes can be broken down. It was suggested that activities for children in small groups and child observation should be used in pre-primary school because they help teachers to see children as individuals and allow them to notice possible risks to the development of the child earlier (Monto & Simojoki-Tavi, 2005).

All the early intervention projects at Helsinki pre-primary schools suggest that parents have a need and a desire to discuss a variety of matters related to their child's welfare. One problem seems to be that the personnel do not have enough experts or other people with whom to talk and to share matters. The personnel of the pre-primary school work with children and families in various and difficult situations and often feel that they do not have the means to operate and respond to all the family needs. Thus, pre-primary school personnel also have a need for support and need to be able to reflect on their feelings related to families (Tapola-Tuohikumpu, 2005).

2.4 Inclusive practice for children

2.4.1 Diversity and interaction

Nilholm and Alm (2010) showed that children are inclusive and view difference as an asset. The study was made in a heterogeneous classroom. In general, the children seemed to enjoy the forms of work in the class and liked their peers. Also, the ground rules of the classroom seemed firmly established among the children (Nilholm & Alm, 2010). Inclusion, consequently, is studied as a long-lasting process of change, whereby ordinary schools are gradually made more responsible for accommodating the needs of a greater diversity of pupils. Both the extension of the ordinary school system to increase its recruitment of pupils with different backgrounds and abilities, and the restructuring and reform of schools to respond to this extension are the focus of inclusion (Nilsen, 2010).

Good academic results in schools are related to high levels of diversity. It has been demonstrated that cultural diversity has a positive educational impact on pupils in issues such as level of comfort with members of different racial and ethnic groups. This is essential in increasingly diverse societies, as well as in situations where a higher level of educational aspirations exists (The Civil Rights Project, 2002).

According to Ladd, Kochenderfer and Coleman (1996), the impact of friendship quality may affect young children's social and emotional adjustment, especially in school settings. They found that when a child has several positive friendship processes, these emerged as significant predictors of the child's early school adjustment. Both validation and aid forecasted gains in children's perceptions of classroom peer support. The measures of these two processes correlated positively with children's perceptions of their own influence in school. They also found that aid forecasted changes in how children liked school; children who characterised their friendships as offering higher levels of aid tended to like school better.

In recent years, the pedagogical context has been moved towards the pedagogy of diversity. Respect for diversity covers many aspects like gender, a pupil's cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, educational and curricular strategies and children's grouping. The aim of the pedagogy of diversity is to combine social and educational approaches towards socially excluded families and children. It refers mainly to community involvement, and also includes family involvement (Bennet et al., 2007).

Educational equality is reached when all children have the same opportunity to acquire the knowledge necessary in the information society and when, at the same time, their cultural and religious identities are acknowledged in the school (Castells et al., 1999). Both cultural minorities and migrant pupils are considered to be part of this reality. In Finland, immigrant children aged between 7 and 17 have the same right to primary and secondary education as Finnish children (Finnish Constitutional Law 21/2004).

Data from the OECD (2002) demonstrated that while 89% of native pupils who were between the ages of 20 to 24 had completed upper secondary education, only 19% of non-native pupils did. Along the same lines, in 2005 the rate of school dropouts was 30.1% for non-native pupils and only 13% for native pupils (European Commission, 2006). Data also showed that pupils from a migrant background (non-native or first generation native pupils) gain lower results in mathematics in comparison to native pupils (OECD, 2010b).

One of the keys to creating inclusive schools is to understand that similarity and difference can be complementary. By highlighting the diverse talents and skills individuals possess, and the ways in which these talents and skills meet the needs of others, diversity becomes an accepted and necessary part of the community. As a result, every juvenile is recognised for his or her uniqueness, thus eliminating the need to use terms such as regular or special when speaking about children (Boscardin & Jacobson, 1997).

2.4.2 Inclusive practices for multilingual children

A pupil's right to equal educational opportunities includes both the right to be proficient in the language of instruction and to have full competence in the mother tongue. The European Parliament resolution on integrating immigrants in Europe through schools and multilingual education enshrines the right of school-age children to have a state education, which includes their right to learn the language of their host country without having a harmful effect on their right to learn their

mother tongue. Descendants of immigrants who are proficient in the language of the host country should have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the mother tongue and culture of their country of origin. Educational support must be provided for immigrant children when they are not proficient in the language of their host country, to prevent them from being at a disadvantage in comparison to other children (European Parliament, 2005).

In Finland, Sweden, Romania, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Slovenia, cultural minority pupils have the opportunity to be taught in their native language. In some cases this depends on whether there is sufficient demand, like a minimum number of pupils in Romania and the Czech Republic or a request expressed by parents or pupils in Lithuania, or the Flemish community in Belgium and Luxembourg (INCLUD-ED, 2007).

The incorporation of the language and culture of minority pupils contributes towards their cultures being valued within the school context, and this encourages the empowerment of pupils. Pupils' native language development and a good proficiency in their mother tongue is also necessary for both progress and achievement in a second language. A multilingual framework which includes the incorporation of the native language into the school curriculum helps multilingual pupils succeed. Although a multilingual child may initially experience learning difficulties, a multilingual framework can lead to significant benefits in academic success (Luciak, 2004; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988).

Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) argues that the child should be able to discuss with an adult of his own native language both in pre-primary school and school. In addition, she believes that when refugees and other immigrants do not master proper language skills, there will be considerable social and psychological problems, which will be much more expensive than organising good mother-tongue teaching. In her opinion, the goal of language teaching should be a high level of bilingualism for immigrants (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988).

I have dealt with inclusion in previous studies. "Immigrant pupils in primary schools and secondary schools in Helsinki" (Niemelä, 1995), for example, showed how the attitude of parents and the media towards immigrants is reflected in pupils' attitudes. The study also showed that mother tongue lessons are very important for immigrant pupils. In the integration of immigrant pupils into the classroom, their knowledge and skills from their native culture should be presented. There could, for example, sometimes be a lesson dealing with the immigrants' home countries. The interviews also revealed the importance of the teacher's role (Niemelä, 1995).

According to Aunio (2006), children with multilingual backgrounds and special education needs have weaker skills in number-sense development in pre-primary years. By applying carefully planned instructional tools at the pre-primary stage, it is possible to support the weaker mathematical development of multilingual children so that they achieve a similar performance to that of children showing average development when entering primary school (Aunio, 2006).

2.4.3 Practices in learning a foreign language

The risk of failing in school is linked to the study language of immigrant pupils. When teaching is done in a language other than the child's mother tongue, children do not learn their own mother language completely. These teaching actions, where the dominant language is learned at the cost of the mother tongue, have a negative effect on inclusion. According to Skutnabb-Kangas et al. (2003), inclusive practices would involve children acquiring knowledge of the dominant language to add to their linguistic repertoire, without having a detrimental effect on their mother tongue. The result is additive bilingualism or multilingualism, and at the same time the mother tongue is supported and maintained (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2003).

Verhoeven (1998) upholds the hypothesis that those who have a bilingual cognitive framework are less efficient in various sub-processes related to reading and writing when compared to their monolingual peers. In order to reduce the differences between the results of native pupils and foreign pupils, learning the official language is a necessary factor to promote their integration. At the same time, the preservation of their native tongue and culture must be ensured. In Niemelä (1995) I also argued that multilingualism is certainly an asset for those who are linguistically talented. Moreover, even for pupils with standard language skills or few linguistic difficulties in the mother tongue, multilingualism can pose challenges (Niemelä, 1995; Verhoeven, 1998).

Krashen, a proponent of the monolingual approach, has argued that people learning foreign languages follow basically the same route as they acquire their mother tongue; hence the use of the mother tongue in the learning process should be minimised (Krashen, 1981).

It is also noted that performance differences between immigrant and native pupils cannot only be attributed to these pupil characteristics. Countries where there are either relatively small performance differences between immigrant and native pupils, tend to have well-established language support programmes with relatively clearly defined goals and standards (OECD, 2006b).

2.4.4 Multilingual framework with the maternal language

Linguistic problems are the biggest barrier to social integration. Teaching the language of origin can help promote social integration and the identity of immigrant children and families. This is the goal for most European countries, but often a lack of resources prevents this aim from being put into practice. The social integration of immigrant pupils, their parents and family are recognised as essential everywhere in Europe. The aim is to overcome linguistic problems firstly by using interpreters in schools, secondly by producing written information on the school system in the language of origin or that of the immigrant family, and thirdly by recruiting resource persons specifically responsible for guiding and orientation (Eurydice, 2009).

In Finland, municipalities and schools are encouraged to develop multicultural communication to fortify the social integration of immigrants. Immigrants also have the legal right to use an interpreter when needed, for example, in meetings

dealing with issues relating to the migrant person. Written information about the school system is published for immigrant families, but generally this information is published in a limited range of languages. The Ministry of Education and other authorities responsible for education and local schools share this responsibility in Finland. Local authorities, mostly teachers, who are responsible for the reception and orientation of immigrant pupils, decide on the use of people as resources. An immigrant's mother tongue is usually included in the normal school teaching, according to the resources of the community or school (Ministry of Education and Culture Finland, 2010a; Eurydice, 2009).

2.4.5 Inclusion of children with special education needs

One form of segregation has generally been skill groups. There is a thin line between segregation and children's right to special education. Nowadays, special education should be integrated into normal school activity as much as possible. However, special educators continue to see special education as a separate entity within the school rather than an integral part of regular education (Blecker & Boakes, 2010). Special light is shed on the process of inclusion concerning pupils with special educational needs, since this group in particular has been exposed to exclusionary processes and has been a central focus of the educational policy debate. Consequently, the move towards inclusion will focus the national educational policy on both the mainstream and the special educational system and on the inter-relationship between the two (Nilsen, 2010).

In Finland, about 47,000 pupils, or 8.5% of comprehensive school pupils, were transferred to special education in autumn 2009. The number was almost unchanged from the previous year. Around 23% of comprehensive school pupils received part-time special education during the 2008–2009 academic year. The number of pupils attending part-time special education grew by 1,600 from the previous year (Statistics Finland, 2010e). In 2009, 29% of those transferred to special education were fully and 24% partially integrated into groups attending general education. In all, 33% of those transferred to special education received teaching in special groups in comprehensive schools and 14% in special schools. More often than in the previous year, special education was arranged in general education groups and in special groups in comprehensive schools (Statistics Finland, 2010f).

As a researcher and a teacher with 17 years of special education experience, I consider that special education should be seen mainly as a temporary arrangement when required. If a special education class is seen as the best solution for the pupil, then there should also be a possibility to return to a normal class later. At least in Finland today, a special needs pupil generally stays in a special class throughout compulsory school. If a pupil is mentally and physically disabled then that individual may benefit more if she/he is placed in a special class where there are a sufficient number of assistants. There are, however, a variety of special needs. Sometimes pupils only need more time to learn, and in those cases it is enough for them to have a possibility to see a special education teacher weekly, for example in subjects where they need help. In special education there is also a danger that multicul-

tural children are diagnosed as special needs children when they only actually have a problem with language skills.

2.5 Inclusive practice for families

2.5.1 Inclusive practices for family participation

In the second level of the circle “Different agents concerning inclusion” (see Figure 1, presented in section 2.8.3), the family is placed surrounding the child’s level, the first level of the circle, illustrating that for the child the family is the closest agent. Moreover, when the third or fourth level of the circle focuses on and interacts with the child’s level, the level family has an effect also. With these interactions in mind, I present studies here from the family’s point of view. When identifying strategies that support inclusive education, one of the findings is that providing more adults in the classroom enriches a pupil’s interactions (Ojala, 2010). In Finland the Injunction (24/011/2004) of the National Board of Education does not allow parental help in classrooms. Parents can, however, observe, and there is a possibility for them to take a 1–1½-year course leading to the School Assistant Examination. A qualified school assistant may, for example, help and support pupils with special education needs in classrooms, both in the pre-primary and primary school (Finnish National Board of Education, 2010b).

In Finnish early childhood education and school practice, parents are involved in making early childhood education plans for their child. Parents or other adult volunteers are not involved in educational activity per se. However, special support for children is available in Finland and helps teachers, children and parents to understand and support the child’s learning. Also, when the child enters primary school, the general conditions for inclusive practices are good. The drop-out rates among pupils in comprehensive schools in Finland have been less than 1% (Ojala, 2010).

Programmes such as “Education of Roma” in Greece, Spain and many other EU countries, but not in Finland, promote the participation of parents in schools “to strengthen the ties between the Roma community and the school community at large” (UNESCO, 2004, p. 37–38). The “Step-by-Step” programme, carried out in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia, and promoted by the Open Society Institute, provides training and support for teachers while also encouraging parental involvement in the classroom. Parental involvement at all levels of education includes involving parents in the classroom as teachers’ aides, in parent-teacher associations, and in regular parent-teacher interaction (INCLUD-ED, 2007).

The involvement of Roma children’s parents has also been highlighted as being essential to avoid educational exclusion, through projects such as the Step-by-Step programme (Ringold, Orenstein & Wilkens, 2005) and Romano Missio’s “Aina ammattiin asti” [“Right up to a profession”] programme in Finland (Hagert, 2001). Parental involvement in success at school has been highlighted in relation to minority groups such as the Muslim community in Belgium, where schools which are predominantly Muslim are strongly stigmatised (Merry, 2005). The role models

project in Denmark involves parents with a minority ethnic background travelling throughout the country and visiting schools describing their school experiences and success in their professional careers (Undervisningsministeriet/The Ministry of Education Denmark, 2005). This kind of involvement gives children self-confidence and shows them many possible ways to succeed in society.

Family participation in school activities has been shown to be a significant source of motivation and creation of meaning for cultural groups, such as Romani pupils (Gómez & Vargas, 2003). As Vygotsky (1978) has proposed, children learn better when they interact with adults or with more capable peers. The inclusion of adults, members of the family and other people in classrooms is a point of reference in schools for children with different origins and from different cultural minorities. For the rest of society, the inclusion of people/parents from ethnic minorities in classrooms is a key factor in helping to overcome the stereotypes and prejudices which might exist in the surrounding community and it contributes to the recognition of minority groups and their identities. Moreover, in decision-making processes, cultural recognition and better educational outcomes are promoted through democratic family and community participation. They are also promoted through accountability systems in schools, when teachers, pupils, families and other members of the community coordinate their activities to overcome inequalities (Orfield, 2000).

Kuusisto (2010) points out that when parents' own social networks can inform them about the everyday life of the day care centre in their own language and from the perspective of their own cultural background, the starting of day care can be much easier. The research project MUCCA (Multicultural Children and Adults in Day Care) outlines practices in multicultural day care centres in the Helsinki city area that encourage parental involvement, such as parents' evenings, art projects for both children and parents, and picnics organised by parents' committees. Parental cafes and parent meetings especially in their own minority language can support the educational partnership and networking of parents, particularly with those with immigrant backgrounds. In the MUCCA project, parents had the opportunity to see from photos and by video diary service how their children were being cared for during the day. By means of photo images, even parents with limited knowledge of Finnish acquired an idea of the child's satisfaction and the daily programme in the day care (Kuusisto, 2010).

Family participation or parental involvement is important, showing to children that their parents are interested in the child's pre-primary education. The challenge is to provide inclusive practices to families that the families would see as important. Some of these practices are described earlier, but every pre-primary school is unique and the professionals working at the pre-primary school usually have the best knowledge about the methods that work.

2.5.2 Inclusive practices for family education

Information regarding family education is often limited either to describing resources families provide for their children or to supporting families in the educational process. For instance, the PIRLS 2001 test sponsored by the United States includes an item on this matter. Thirty-five countries selected from around the world participated in PIRLS 2001, which defines reading literacy as the following: the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and valued by the individual. The study did not include Finland, but for average combined reading literacy Sweden scored the highest grade in this test; second were Netherlands, then the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Latvia, Canada, Lithuania, Hungary and the United States (Ogle, Sen, Pahlke et al., 2003).

According to Sen (1999), education and economics are related. Sen states that people can become much more productive over time through education, learning, and skill formation. This contributes greatly to the process of economic expansion. People have the ability to do certain things that they have reason to value. Sen divides valuation into direct and indirect forms. The direct form of valuation means that a person takes care of basic needs like having enough food and assistance. Indirect values benefit the whole community; this means that people increase their human capital and this will eventually benefit the whole community in the form of increasing productivity (Sen, 1999).

Family education provides a different visual angle from family culture. For example, in Spain in dialogic literary circles, family members read classics from world literature, share comments on the books at home and create new educational expectations that have a direct influence on the family learning culture. When non-academic families participate in literacy processes, they create new reading practices, cultural roles and models for interaction. These indirectly influence children's school achievements (Soler, 2004).

In Finland, communal libraries play an important role in providing reading events open to everyone. For example, they arrange regular reading clubs, such as the reading club ("lukupiiri") in Vantaa City Library, which gathers people to discuss various topics in Finnish (Vantaa City Library, 2010). Also, to develop the incentive to learn, Helsinki has libraries that provide help and facilities for children to do their homework. For primary school children, during term time, some libraries hold an event called homework help ("Läksy-Help") in the afternoons, where a library worker helps and advises children to find the information required for school tasks and gives tips on matters relating to the homework (Helsinki City Library, 2010b).

In Finland, The Helsinki City Library, among others, encourages immigrants to learn Finnish through, for example, the weekly "Finnish Language Café" to improve Finnish in an informal and social setting. There are also other events planned especially for immigrants. The Helsinki City Library acts as a multilingual library in Finland and receives a special state subsidy for the purpose. The aim is to enhance library services for foreign-born citizens, to provide information and guidance, as well as to purchase materials in rare languages for the inter-library use of

ethnic minorities in Finland (Helsinki City Library, 2010a; Helsinki City Library, 2010c).

Some families may face discrimination due to the fact that their mother tongue is not taken into account. One inclusive practice is to publish documents in people's native languages and provide interpreters for parents and their children. Language classes are a typical way to help include families. In Cyprus, for example, in order to include the immigrant children's parents in their children's education, the Ministry of Education offers conversational evening classes in Greek or in other foreign languages. These are attempts to assist them in learning Greek and improving their communication skills. These kinds of practices have also been introduced in Italy through language classes for the families of immigrant pupils with support from the Ministry of Education and in co-operation with local organisations. These practices help to encourage the inclusion of families which would otherwise be excluded due to their foreign mother tongue (Eurydice, 2004).

Immigrants can enter general education in Finland, and they also have the possibility of study support and an education specifically provided for immigrants (Ministry of Education and Culture Finland, 2010a). The basic idea of adult education is that, regardless of the pupil's age, everyone has the right to self-motivated learning. In adult education, Finland has many alternatives as adult education and training are provided by some 800 institutions. Adult education also includes staff development and other training provided or purchased by employers. Labour market training is financed by the labour administration and mainly intended for unemployed persons and those aged 20 or over who are threatened by unemployment. Finnish adult education and training has traditionally been divided into two main areas: general adult education and vocational adult education and training. Many of them have English study programmes (Finnish National Board of Education, 2010c).

Adult education is available within the official education system in adult upper secondary schools, vocational institutions and adult training centres, national and private vocational institutions, universities, colleges and universities of applied sciences. Voluntary education opportunities open to everyone vary from adult education centres, folk high schools, summer universities, study centres and sports institutes to open universities for anybody with no age limit or previous educational requirements (Ministry of Education and Culture Finland, 2010b; VirtuOPO, 2010).

There are over 200 adult education centres in Finland called either citizens' or workers' institutes and they are generally run by local communes. Some of them are privately owned. They offer education and training mainly to the adult population in their area. Anyone can attend the courses, irrespective of their age, profession or educational background. The adult education centres promote cultural and educational equality by offering everyone opportunities for self-development to learn citizenship skills. Adult education centres cover the major part of Finnish non-formal education (The Finnish Association of Adult Education Centres 2010; VirtuOPO, 2010).

Almost all Finnish universities offer Open University education. Open Universities offer study modules and individual courses with teachers professional in

their discipline from nearly all university faculties, though Open Universities cannot award degrees. However, it is generally possible to incorporate studies into a university degree if the pupil is later admitted to a university degree programme (The Open University in Finland, 2010; The University of Helsinki Open University, 2010).

In the Helsinki area there are two main adult education centres, namely the Finnish and the Swedish centres. The former offers courses designed for immigrants in many topics like information technology, home economics, crafts, art, music and foreign languages, but it also holds classes in English and Russian on Finnish culture, society and history. Finnish language courses are held in various locations throughout Helsinki and range from courses for beginners to advanced level courses. The latter offers courses in central and eastern Helsinki. The teaching programme includes such subjects as 18 different languages, art and handicraft, physical exercise and dance, ICT, music, domestic science and environmental studies. Courses are organised in Finnish and Swedish at different levels especially for foreign pupils and can be attended by anyone (The Finnish Adult Education Centre of the City of Helsinki, 2010; The Swedish Adult Education Centre of Helsinki, 2010).

2.6 Inclusive practice for teachers

2.6.1 Diversity and diverse education practices

In Finland, ability groups, i.e. streaming was removed in the 1980s through comprehensive school reform (Finnish Constitutional Law 132/1984). That might be one reason for Finnish pupils' academic success in the OECD Programme for International Pupil Assessment PISA (OECD, 2010a). In Europe, grouping by ability or streaming is still common in many educational systems. Mickelson and Heath (1999) analysed the effects of grouping secondary courses in a school district in the U.S., and concluded that tracking and streaming is a source of inequality with regards to the educational opportunities of African American pupils. Segregation in the form of streaming in academic classes in secondary schools affected pupils' opportunities to learn (Mickelson & Heath, 1999).

Integration of minority children is difficult with programmes specifically aimed at ethnic minority pupils. Helping pupils to overcome their disadvantaged academic situation or to maintain their culture and language, these programmes achieve their purpose by segregating children from regular classes. In some European countries, learning the language of instruction often motivates schools to separate recently arrived migrants from their normal class for a period of time if their level in the official language of instruction does not allow them to directly access the regular system. In that way, and although the objective of these programmes is to progressively integrate the recently arrived migrants as quickly as possible within their group-class, this can lead to labelling pupils and reducing instrumental objectives. These reception methods are carried out in different ways, either through reception classrooms, intensive language classes or transitional classes, as in Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Neth-

erlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the German community in Belgium (INCLUD-ED, 2007). Inclusionary support methods and supplementary classes, such as additional support in the classroom, should replace segregation measures. For example, additional support in the classroom is provided in Ireland and Slovakia to help minority pupils, as well as migrant pupils in Denmark, France, Poland, and the United Kingdom, and pupils with language-related difficulties in the United Kingdom. Also, the extension of learning time is specially aimed at migrant pupils in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany and Portugal (INCLUD-ED, 2007; Driesen, 2002; EUMC, 2004).

In Finland, preparatory education for immigrant pupils is used only for a short period of time and the aim is to improve language skills. In some cases preparatory education is not available or is not used. The help of school assistants is very common for immigrant pupils and sometimes teaching in smaller groups is organised. Mother language classes are offered every week for immigrant pupils (Finnish National Board of Education, 2009).

Pupils from certain social and cultural groups often experience segregation practices, for example tracking and streaming, that lead them to educational exclusion. Tracking pupils due to their culture is an exclusionary practice that has even lead to an over-representation of children from minority cultural groups in special educational programmes (EUMC, 2004). As has been observed (Braddock, 1989), minority pupils are over-represented in vocational educational tracks and under-represented in academic programmes. In addition, Mickelson and Heath (1999) pointed out that attending a segregated minority elementary school had a direct negative effect on high school track placement. The greater the proportion of elementary school time pupils spent in segregated minority schools, the lower the likelihood that they would be placed in a college-bound track. Placing pupils in certain tracks because of their cultural background provides them with fewer opportunities for school success. Braddock and Slavin (1992) explain that tracking inhibits the development of interracial respect, understanding and friendship; it undermines democratic values and contributes to a stratified society. Moreover, segregation practices such as ability grouping, which are based on culture, increase racism and xenophobic feelings. Ability grouping creates classes with a disproportionate number of pupils from different racial or social class groups; race plays a role in the assignment to streams (as well as pupils' prior achievement, and their socio-economic diversity), which is discriminatory ability grouping. Certain ethnic groups of pupils in the U.S. as well as other pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds are over-represented in low streams; therefore the effects of grouping on pupil learning opportunities are especially negative for cultural minorities (Braddock & Slavin, 1992; Mickelson & Heath, 1999; Lucas & Berends, 2002).

Educational practices excluding children from group-class activities during school hours should be avoided. In a multicultural pre-primary school in Finland, lessons for the pre-primary group were taught by teachers and participated in by the children individually, but working in pairs or in groups was rare in practice. In playing and other kinds of situations, the children performed in pairs or groups (Paavola, 2007).

There is a thin line between support measurements and segregation. Support should be available to everyone but it should be given so that child can be with other children. Support can be given with the help of a special education teacher; this usually means meeting a special education teacher once or twice a week in his/her room. In Finland there is a tendency to move away from special education classes towards teaching everybody together. When needed, support can be given by adding adults to the classroom (school assistance) and by lessons with a special education teacher.

2.6.2 Pre-primary school promoting school success

At the European level, school success is defined as the decrease in dropout rate, completion of upper secondary education and participation in secondary education (European Commission, 2000). Despite the influence of socio-economic status on achievement, nations with effective family-assistance policies are more able to overcome the handicap of social poverty. A cross-national education survey (Heynemann, 2004) shows that schools with higher drop-out rates are also associated with lower levels of educational quality, socio-economic status, pupil health, welfare and so on. Cross-national studies have been used to challenge common assumptions, for instance that American schools are more likely to experience violence and classroom disruption (Heynemann, 2004).

Pre-primary education can prevent social and educational exclusion and sustain pupils' long-term school success. The early childhood period gives the best investment in human capital in relation to later opportunities during schooling at primary and secondary level. Learning in early childhood is very important, because learning results influence further learning. Co-operation with peers and adults helps children to develop important basic life skills like autonomy, understanding, creativity, problem-solving and persistence (OECD, 2006a).

2.6.3 Social inclusion at school

Educational practices can either foster school success or school failure. Current educational practices connected to school failure very often target pupils from vulnerable groups, such as cultural minorities, migrants, boys and disabled pupils. For successful learning, the most critical areas in a knowledge society are associated with mathematics, science, reading and ICT. Schools are often unable to pay attention to how inequalities can be effectively eliminated. On the contrary, they often try to use segregation practices and reproduce existing inequalities among socio-economic and ethnic groups. This approach ultimately leads to exclusion in education and society (Ojala, 2010).

In Finland, in small rural schools where people know each other, there is a strong sense of community and as a rule no child is left alone. Village school pupils learn to co-operate, accept diversity and help and assist each other. Only a small amount of distressing or troubled behaviour appeared in these schools (Kilpeläinen, 2010). The inclusion experience of pupils is beneficial to their development and in

keeping with their rights. A culturally heterogeneous group benefits pupils' achievement and social inclusion (Bailey & du Plessis, 1997).

To promote solidarity between pupils as well as self-esteem and academic results, Elboj and Niemelä (2010) referred to a practice of interactive groups where the classroom is turned into sub-communities of mutual learners in which pupils help each other, while the role of the teacher is that of knowledge advisor. In a classroom using small interactive groups, pupils rotate dynamically between the various instrumental learning activities, as they are all carried out at the same time in a single session, and involve all the pupils. All this leads to better relationships between everyone involved (Elboj & Niemelä, 2010).

The findings of McClelland, Morrison & Holmes (2000) highlight the important contribution that learning-related social skills make to successful school transition and to later academic success. Greater attention to a child's early work-related skills will be important for understanding and improving the academic achievement of children (McClelland et al., 2000). In the classroom, a positive team spirit which encourages the acceptance of diversity and diverse populations improves pupils' self-esteem, self-perception and achievement. Through the development of inclusive schools, diversity can help towards creating a community that recognises individual differences. In other words, the inclusion of diverse pupils in the classroom helps people with diverse backgrounds to learn to live together in the community. The development of inclusive schools can therefore be seen as the next logical step in the improvement of schooling (Boscardin & Jacobson, 1997).

Social inclusion at school is important, and students should feel that they are all equal. If some students are placed in special education classes, and stay there for years, there is a risk that they will be cut off from other students. Sometimes special education classes can be justified as they are smaller (c. 8–10 students) and they usually have one teacher for all subjects. But this can also encourage feelings of isolation among pupils. At least the situation should be monitored carefully and pupils should wherever possible go back to the normal classes or alternatively join normal classes in some subjects.

2.6.4 Teachers and inclusive practices

Inclusion is challenging for teachers. It requires them to have skills related to their own teaching disciplines, but also communication skills and collaborative strategies that will enable them to work with colleagues (Blecker & Boakes, 2010). In a survey of members of the American Psychological Association, respondents generally acknowledged the importance of incorporating diversity topics in their classes (Simoni, Sexton-Radek, Yescavage, Richard & Lundquist, 1999). The survey questioned 703 respondents including tenure-track professors as well as teachers, adjunct instructors, visiting professors, and those with other positions. Respondents had teaching experience from 1 to 67 years (Simoni et al., 1999).

The results showed that in addition to incorporating diversity topics, respondents also acknowledged the need to take time to discuss these issues in their classrooms. Those who rated incorporating diversity topics as more important reported that they allowed more time in their classes for discussion of these topics, they

were more likely to have taught a diversity course, and they employed a more interactive teaching style. These are all transformative issues for inclusion. On the other hand, as exclusionary issues for inclusion, respondents listed a few barriers to teaching diversity issues, such as the lack of adequate resources and professor inadequacy and the need for additional training. The most disturbing result was that 27% of respondents reported that it was not relevant to teach diversity issues (Simoni et al., 1999).

When pupils are placed in heterogeneous groups, teachers can capitalise on diversity so that they can use peers as resources to support learning (Fung & Wilkinson, 2002). For example, research has shown that Roma children adapt better in mixed classes with the support of a teaching assistant from their culture (Gerganov, Varbanova & Kyuchukov, 2005). In Europe, the educational trend is to promote the recognition of cultural minorities in schools throughout the curriculum. The instrumental dimension of learning does not reflect the existing cultural plurality. A culturally sensitive curriculum is essential for inclusion. An ethnocentric perspective within the school context has serious consequences for pupils from cultural minorities. The attitudes of teachers as well as the response that the school offers to diversity are important prerequisites for promoting pupil success at school (INCLUD-ED, 2007).

Teachers should take into account that the fundamental beliefs of pupils, learned and internalised from home, native culture or different social groups, have considerable impact on learning (Findley, Lindsey & Watts, 2001). Intercultural education is not so much a matter of teaching something different, but more of teaching differently with the existing curriculum (Leclercq, 2002). In her study of ethical leadership among principals in multicultural schools Kuukka (2009) states that principals follow several ethical approaches in solving and responding to ethical dilemmas. Though dealing with a variety of situations, principals were logical and consistent in solving conflicts, and they expressed consistency through focusing on the pupil and the idea that their school was a school for all. From the point of view of inclusion, every school should also be a multicultural school (Kuukka, 2009).

Talib (1999) also notes that if schools as a community are willing to promote the equal education of pupils with foreign backgrounds, these changes can only be achieved by changing the school culture. According to Talib (2005), the tolerance of immigrants is not enough. There is still a need to change attitudes towards the appreciation of cultural diversity and multicultural schools. Talib mentions, for example, support for teachers, a sense of community and a belief in the ability of pupils to solve problems obstructing the path towards a multicultural school. These practices can be seen as inclusive practices, because Talib adds communal knowledge and the global responsibility to expand the professionalism of teachers in multicultural schools (Talib, 2005).

I would argue that teachers should see and experience other cultures as much as possible. This can, of course, be done by studying, but personal experience is also important. When it is realised that people have much in common with each other, then a better understanding between different cultures can hopefully be achieved, and along with it inclusion can increase.

2.7 Inclusive practice for community/administration

2.7.1 Local practices for social inclusion

Communities play an important role in providing services for young people, such as youth centres and youth clubs. Other organisations, such as the church, also play a part, and if different organisations can work together the best results are achieved.

In Spain many projects have been implemented that promote minority voices, such as Voice of the Voiceless, INCLUD-ED (2007). Flecha (2009) tells of a neighbourhood project realised 30 years ago. To improve the neighbourhood, an organisation called VERN was developed. The organisation included such groups as Christians, neighbourhood representatives and local feminists with the intention of starting a general discussion and helping develop a 'community of dreams'. In order to obtain this goal, they had to resolve things like improving education, health, housing conditions, urban planning, etc. By listening to diverse people in the neighbourhood, this project proved so successful that similar projects were soon set up (INCLUD-ED 2007; Flecha 2009).

In Finland, municipalities in particular are in a key position to prevent the exclusion of children and young people. Educational guidance for young people is included in municipal youth policy through the Youth Act (Finnish Act of Parliament, Nuorisolaki 72/2006). Municipalities should provide recreational facilities and opportunities, information and advice, support for youth associations, sports, cultural, international and multicultural youth work, environmental youth education and youth workshops or other appropriate forms of activity for local circumstances and needs (Finnish Act of Parliament, Nuorisolaki 72/2006; Kuntatiedon keskus, 2010). The Church, too, supports local projects that aim to prevent social exclusion in Finland. For example, in 2010, the Board of the Evangelical Lutheran Church implemented seven projects that included, among other groups, families with children and young people (The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, 2010).

Multicultural work to prevent social exclusion is quite common in churches, and in the capital area of Finland there are church-led local activities not only in Finnish or Swedish but also in Estonian, Russian, Arabic and Chinese. The Parish Union of Helsinki provides, for example, guidance and advice for immigrants on everyday issues, and organises activities for immigrants such as peer groups, clubs, excursions and summer family camps. Local churches have activities for children, parents and families, such as music play school, family clubs, mother-child events and discussions on parental issues (Helsingin seurakuntayhtymä, 2010).

As mentioned above, communities have an important role in providing services for young people, and if different organisations can work together the best results are achieved. In Finland, there are also non-governmental organizations working for child and family welfare, for example the largest child welfare organisation in Finland, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, and a Swedish-speaking organisation, Folkhälsan. The Mannerheim League promotes the wellbeing of children and of families with children and co-operates with ministries and local organisations. The Mannerheim League arranges various activities and serv-

ices from local family clubs and child care services to afternoon programmes for school children and telephone counselling for families with children and young people. Folkhälsan also provides various activities and support for children and families in its social welfare and health care operations. The services are in Swedish and include, for example, cafes for parents, day care, swimming schools and summer camps for children (Folkhälsan, 2004; Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, 2004).

2.7.2 Respect for diversity and the learning environment

According to Sen (2009, p.193), “we live in a world in which there are a lot of other people, and we can give them room for their own way of living even without adopting their way as something that we must see as a good thing to promote”. That is to say, we should give room to the diversity of cultures though we do not have to agree with everything. Also Dervin and Keihäs (2013) emphasise, in order to decrease preconceptions and prejudices in encounters, we have to understand the changing diversity of all individuals and communities; what is essential is to find universal human factors that unite individuals. Dervin and Keihäs (2013) argue that culture is a continuously changing, diverse discussion process, not a stable or specifying determinant of people’s behaviour. Inclusion, too, can be seen as a perpetually developing process which never reaches completion.

Kuusisto and Lamminmäki-Vartia (2012) and Riitaoja, Poulter and Kuusisto (2010) speak about different worldviews, in the sense that everyone holds an ontological and ethical orientation to the world, humanity and life questions. They argue that, in the learning environment, discussions on worldviews and values should be increased instead of nourishing an illusion of neutrality and equality. Pre-primary schools and day care centres are in a key position to support mutual respect in society; therefore professionals need to have a respectful approach towards every individual, despite the differences in people’s cultural backgrounds. In the everyday life of day care centres, there are opportunities for positive recognition between staff and parents, teachers, children and children’s peer groups. The foundation for multicultural acceptance can already be constructed in pre-primary schools and day care centres (Kuusisto & Lamminmäki-Vartia, 2012; Riitaoja et al., 2010).

By teaching people about interaction between environments, cultures and languages, we help alert citizens to the need to preserve humanity’s heritage in every domain. In other words, ecologically, the strongest ecosystems are those that are the most diverse. Language and cultural diversity maximise the chances of human success and adaptability (Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2003).

In modern society, access to quality education has become more and more important. It is known that the mechanisms of achieving quality education are complicated and value-based (Moss & Pence, 1994; Ojala, 2004). Recent findings from the EPPE 1997–2003 study (Effective pre-primary and primary education from age 3–11) in UK show that the quality of the learning environment is perhaps the most important factor when understanding and explaining pupils’ differences in learning. An even more important finding in the EPPE study was that in the research period

covered respect for diversity was one of the most powerful quality predictors for learning experiences and school achievements (Melhuish et al., 2006).

The EPPE study can be informative in showing how pre-primary schools, schools and families can support the development of disadvantaged or ethnic minority children to succeed against the odds. By improving the quality of pre-primary practices, especially for boys, disadvantaged children and children at risk of learning or behavioural difficulties could make a better start at school. Also, effective primary school education had an impact especially on children from highly disadvantaged backgrounds (Melhuish et al., 2006).

An important finding in the EPPE study was that in learning mathematics the primary school effect was stronger than those related to income or the mother's educational background. Children with mothers with low educational qualifications had better social or behavioural outcomes if they attended schools that were more academically effective. Stimulating home learning environments, like parents engaging actively in learning activities with children, was also found to be more important than the social, educational or economic background of the family. Altogether, when helping parents promote children's intellectual development in mathematics, language and in social skills, support from parents in providing good home learning environments is crucial (Melhuish et al., 2006; Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2008).

Flecha (2009) argues that we must be critical of the prevailing school culture. By "the prevailing culture" he means that schools tend to group pupils into different categories.

There is, for example, a tendency to assume that pupils with lower scores come from the lower social classes, and categorization often takes the form of transferring pupils who learn more slowly to separate classes. The ideal situation, however, is that everyone should learn in the same class and under the same teacher. And at the same time, when necessary, teaching is supported by a school assistant or, as Flecha finds, with school volunteers, as is the case in several European countries. Flecha highlights the importance of dialogue in many different contexts, and how all the agents have to be in dialogue with each other. The ideal situation is that everyone should learn in the same class and under the same teacher. The goal of the inclusive society is that everyone has equal rights (Flecha, 2009).

2.8 Theoretical framework

2.8.1 About the critical communicative approach

The theoretical framework is based on the critical communicative approach, which has been developed into a methodology in social sciences. The critical communicative approach was initiated in the middle of the 1990s as a research response to the dialogic stress of societies and sciences (Gómez, Puigvert & Flecha, 2011). By focusing on egalitarian dialogues between the scientific community and researched objects, the aim is to achieve better social justice. Based on the idea of Habermas (1984) that everyone can contribute to constructing knowledge, the critical com-

municative approach sees individuals and groups as capable of language and actions which aim to transform their social reality.

The notion of 'critical' as a term in critical education is often used to mean that education has a deeper meaning for society and is a form of power used by authority (Au & Apple, 2009). The focus of critical attitudes is always to work towards positive changes and transformation. An important aspect of the critical attitude is the deeper meaning of things, which we should try to uncover. 'Critical' means to search and not to believe things at first hand. 'Communicative' approaches are most important when research is related to immigrants and inclusion. Communication is about listening and being on the same level as the participant. It allows for changing experiences and emphasises dialogue (Flecha & Gómez, 2004). Freire's (1998) ideas have influenced the critical aspect of methodology. According to him, people possess critical consciousness and can create meaning in their own situations and change them (Freire, 1998).

Critical communicative methodology is related to critical education, which is commonly represented by Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970). Critical education considers education to be an instrument of empowerment. Critical communicative methodology emphasises the importance of dialogue, the equality of the investigator and the investigated and communication as a tool for greater understanding.

Communicative-dialogic orientation has been greatly influenced by authors like Habermas (1987) and Beck (1992). From a methodological point of view, humans are not only individuals with their own interests but also social agents or subjects capable of language and action. Human agency is the core of social action and shapes knowledge creation in the social and educational fields. If we accept the dialogic nature of society, there is a need to focus on dialogic research. This type of orientation is important when trying to understand and foster changes in aspects of society (Habermas 1984; Beck 1992; Freire 1970).

There is a connection between critical pedagogy and neo-Marxism. Critical pedagogy critiques schools for acting as a tool for those in power, who see the end product of education in terms material production (Au & Apple, 2009). It would seem likely that the neo-Marxist elements of critical pedagogic thinking have evolved in countries with a strong private school system. Apple (1995) has argued that education is only seen as an instrument to serve the ruling classes. This critical communicative perspective is fruitful when studying cultural minorities and people of low economic and educational status, who have a tendency to be marginalised in society (Comez et al., 2011). By fostering dialogue between researchers, experts and people in danger of being marginalised, it is possible to move educational practices away from exclusive towards inclusive practices. In this way, we have the possibility to reach a shared understanding of the way educational practice can foster new educational opportunities for adults and children growing under the threat of exclusion.

When carrying out research through critical communicative methodology, a central task is to make an analysis (Gómez et al., 2011). In this analysis, the identification of exclusionary and transformative dimensions is central. The exclusionary dimensions are situations, phenomena and interactions creating barriers to people's

inclusion in certain practices. Transformative dimensions are identified when situational phenomena and interactions overcome or help people to overcome such barriers. The aim is to identify the elements that reproduce inequalities between people as well as elements that transform inequalities toward equity (Comez et al., 2011). In order to reach this goal, the analysis of data should not merely be based on categories, subcategories and attributes.

The critical communicative study uses data collection techniques which are sensitive to identifying social changes (Comez et al., 2011). In most such studies, qualitative techniques have been used. However, it is possible to use quantitative techniques in data collection and analysis. Three qualitative techniques have especially been shown to be sensitive to identifying the communicative aspect. These are communicative daily-life stories or communicative open-ended interviews, communicative focus group interviews and communicative observations. In this study, communicative open-ended interviews and communicative focus group interviews are used as data collecting techniques. Data is analysed by content analysis and a special focus is placed on finding transformative and exclusionary practices related to inclusion.

2.8.2 Transformative and exclusionary dimensions and a dual conception of reality

Transformation and combination of knowledge is reached by analysing results not only by categories and subcategories, but also by studying transformative and exclusionary dimensions. Transformative dimensions are those that help to overcome barriers to inclusion. Exclusionary dimensions are the barriers that face certain individuals and groups and keep them participating in certain areas or enjoying social benefits, such as education or the labour market. The definition of both dimensions makes it possible to identify existing alternatives that can improve social situations and overcome social problems. This dual dimension of analysis, which includes the voices of social actors (agents), helps people to understand that transformative and exclusionary experiences are constructed on the basis of people's own knowledge (Gómez et al., 2011).

Critical communicative methodology is based on a dual concept of reality which includes the system and the lifeworld (Habermas, 1987). The system is the international academic community and the lifeworld is made up of the interpretations and generalisations that people make based on their daily-life experiences. The key element of critical communicative methodology is contrast, and in matters related to education the job of the researcher is to contrast the knowledge of lifeworlds with the knowledge of the academic community. A voice for the voiceless, including all voices, is the goal. Only through a deep understanding and by engaging in dialogue can this change take place. Through dialogue and by understanding interviewees' lives, the researcher can obtain new information that can lead to constructive change (Gómez et al., 2011).

Inclusion as a phenomenon has a transformative aspect. Transformation means that existence, being, is changing. Inclusion is affected by many aspects and surroundings. This research focuses on actions and practices that support or fail to

support inclusion, called transformative (T) and exclusionary (E). In transformative practices, the voices of social agents are heard, which can help in the transformation of the institution of education, making it more inclusive. Exclusionary practices means that there are, for example, ability groups. In this research, the aim is to understand actions and practices that lead to inclusion. As a phenomenon can always be seen from at least two different sides, it is important to know which support and which fail to support inclusion (Freire, 1970; Flecha & Gómez, 2004).

Critical communicative methodology is based on recognising the division of inclusion into transformative and exclusionary sides, with the aim of achieving 'transformativity', and accomplishes a change towards better inclusion (Flecha & Gómez, 2004). This cannot be achieved if transformative and exclusionary practices cannot be identified. It is noted that the transformative dimension is defined through the exclusionary dimension, and vice versa. They define each other, in other words, there can be no good without evil (Le Compte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992).

As Paulo Freire (1970) says, cultural activity has always been systematic and structured. Cultural activity affects social structure aiming to change (T) or maintain it (E). Freire also highlights the importance of dialogical action. He emphasises anti-dialogical and dialogical action. Freire calls dialogical action "brave" and sees it as serving an organizational goal. Anti-dialogical action, by contrast, is manipulative and serves the goal of conquest (Freire, 1970). These two sides of inclusion have also been noted in the British study "Improving schools developing inclusion" by Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006). This study showed that, when developing inclusive practices, both policies that promote inclusion and policies that undermine inclusion should be taken into account (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006).

In my own study, inclusion is approached from a point of view in which all people are in interference with each other. The aim is to understand inclusion and to find out how people (agents) experience inclusive practices.

2.8.3 Social agents in inclusion

In several studies (e.g. Beck-Gernsheim, Butler & Puigvert, 2003; Freire, 1998; Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1984; Habermas, 1987; Willis, 1977; Sen, 1999), it is argued that society contains not only structures but also agents. By activating these agents, we produce existing social stratification and are able to transform their social inequalities. In this view, according to Amartya Sen (1999), winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Economic Science, inequalities can also be seen as depriving one of the freedom to lead one's life and in taking part in crucial decisions about one's life.

In the present research, all members of the community are understood as agents. The agents of education are pupils, teachers, peers, parents, school principals, administrators and interest groups.

Paulo Freire's (1985) theory about social workers as agents of change highlights the fact that social reality can be transformed. It is not an untouchable or unchangeable destiny, because it is made by men and can be changed by men (Freire, 1985). People commit themselves to actions by justifying them using the

language of reason, which constitutes their rational validation. This validation has a practical function because it guides the action of social agents (Habermas, 1987).

The role of agents is also recognised in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theoretical approach to human development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), human development should be studied by identifying four kinds of interacting systems. The first one starts from the most immediate micro-system (e.g. the home) and ends at the second, the more remote meso-system (e.g. interaction between home and school). The third one is the exo-system (e.g. the parents' work, network of friends, school board) and the fourth is the macro-system (e.g. interaction with the sub-culture, culture as a whole with belief systems and ideologies). The relationship between factors in micro-systems and more distant exo- and macro-systems is recognised in this research. There are many factors influencing children's development and school success. These factors are poverty, low social class, unskilled and low-paid work, low aspiration to study literacy skills, and low educational level of parents. Even a low income or ethnic minority background alone might not be significant; the combination of these factors can have a serious impact on children's development and learning (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In this research, the focus is to study how inclusive practice is experienced from the view of the child, family, school/teachers and community/administration. In this study, the application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) specification about inter-related systems affecting human development is used (Figure 1).

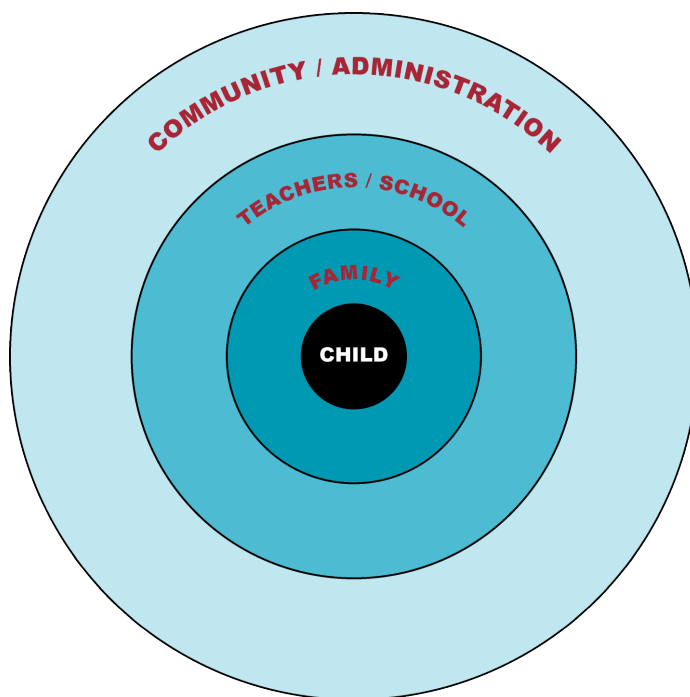


Figure 1. Different agents concerning inclusion

A similar figure is presented by Kuusisto (2011) in her study on the way in which the religious community as a socialisation context affects the development of young people's religious identity and values. In the figure "Socialization-in-context" (Kuusisto, 2011, p. 61), the levels are societal, community, family and individual. The idea that levels are affected by their surroundings in Kuusisto's figure is the same as in Figure 1 in this study. Kuusisto's figure highlights the reducing effect of the surroundings, and by Socialization-in-context Kuusisto means that the larger level has a reduction effect on the smaller level (Kuusisto, 2011).

2.8.4 Reflections on the contextualisation of the study

In theory, inclusionary practice is seen as a way to affect agents and to help overcome inequalities.

When inclusion is seen as a right, it makes everybody equal. This is the ideological situation, but there are many difficulties in the way. Finland as a country has been homogenous for a long time and our language is quite difficult for non-Finns to learn. Language is important: we must have language to communicate, we must also be able to learn new languages, and a mastery of one's mother tongue is important. There have been projects to strengthen knowledge of mother language as in the Kallahti Pre-primary School Project (Tsempoi et al., 2005). A good knowledge of the mother tongue and a firm sense of identity is important to children, and this helps in achieving successful inclusion.

Children are inclusive by nature; they will find ways to communicate. The best results have been achieved in ordinary school where extra resources are placed, like smaller class sizes and more adults in a classroom. High levels of diversity are seen as a strength, as in the study by Nilsen (2010).

One of the most important aspects concerning diversity is the respect, which must come from adults. Children are sensitive to adults' attitudes, and hence adults play an important role in developing a child's sense of self. Individual support needs to be provided, but at the same time teachers need to convey the message that everybody is equal. A great deal of research has been carried out among multilingual children. Verhoeven (1998) argues that learning the official language is a necessary factor in reducing the differences between native pupils and foreign pupils. In an OECD (2006b) study it was also noted that in countries where there are well-established language support programmes there tend to be relatively small performance differences between immigrant and native pupils.

Involving parents in taking an interest in pre-primary school is important. In pre-primary school, children form an understanding about school, and their parents' attitudes also affect this. It is beneficial for parents to take an interest and actively participate in their child's and teachers play an important role in this.

It is difficult to say what is the most important aspect concerning inclusion. All the aspects mentioned above are important. But if just one aspect was selected it would probably be to increase knowledge about different inclusive practices. If so, then hopefully this study will be of benefit to others.

3 Research questions

The leading idea of this study is to analyse inclusive practices experienced by agents, to prevent inequalities and to foster social inclusion. In this study, society is seen as an interaction between systems and agents. Many authors (e.g. Habermas, 1984; Beck, 1992; Sen, 1999; Freire, 1998) have argued that society contains not only structures but also agents. Agents play an important role in preventing exclusion and in transforming inclusive practices. In order to reduce segregation, the practices which increase, support and enhance social inclusion need to be identified.

Inclusive educational practice is seen as a means to reduce segregation and marginalisation through school practice and community involvement. Such practices play an important role in preventing future exclusion, and this is done by successful inclusive practices (e.g. Cunha, Heckman, Lochner & Masterov, 2005). The aim of this research is to find practices that support or unsupport inclusion. The supportive practice is called transformative (T) and the unsupportive is called exclusionary (E). 'Transformative' means that social agents can make their voices heard with the result that the whole structure of education can be more inclusive. 'Exclusionary' refers to the barriers that certain people or groups experience when trying to take advantage of a particular practice or social benefit (Gómez et al., 2011).

The main research question for this study is:

- 1. What are the most transformative and exclusionary practices concerning inclusion according to the different stakeholders (called agents) in the Finnish pre-primary context?**

This question is divided into the following sub-questions:

1.1 What are transformative practices concerning inclusion?

- a) Transformative practice for children
- b) Transformative practice for family
- c) Transformative practice for teachers/school
- d) Transformative practice for community organisation/administration member

1.2 What are exclusionary practices concerning inclusion?

- a) Exclusionary practice for children
- b) Exclusionary practice for family
- c) Exclusionary practice for teachers/school
- d) Exclusionary practice for community organisation/administration member

4 Methodology

4.1 Design of the study

4.1.1 Context

This study has been carried out at a pre-primary school in Helsinki, and looks at people who influence in some way the pre-primary school, the neighbourhood, the primary school and the community. The selection criteria were that the pre-primary school in question should be situated in a low socio-economic area and should contain a large number of immigrant children (about 50%). The school should also have good existing inclusive practices. Also, before starting the research, it was ensured that interviews could be carried out with parents, children, administration members, local organisation members and teachers.

The pre-primary school chosen is located in the eastern part of Helsinki. It is situated in the same building as a primary school and a youth action centre. The building offers a safe and inspiring environment that supports the growth and development of the children in the area from early childhood up to adolescence. The pre-primary school also offers afternoon activities for children in early childhood special education. The school has about 20 children at pre-primary level, about 40 children in day care, nine staff (four of them are qualified pre-primary school teachers) and some assistants. Half of the subjects interviewed were professional staff and some of them did not work at the pre-primary building.

The selected pre-primary school meets the criteria of five different elements. The school is situated in a low socio-economic status area; it has many immigrant pupils; it already has good existing inclusion practices; it achieves good academic results; and it was committed to co-operating closely with the researcher in the organisation of interviews with children, parents, teachers, administration and community members. The chosen school operates with different kinds of programmes which help children and families take an active part in learning. The following is a presentation of these programmes.

Community involvement at the pre-primary school studied

The pre-primary school chosen involves the community in a number of ways. There is substantial co-operation between the pre-primary school and primary school and other actors. Their main target is to promote involvement and contribute to overcoming inequalities. A local working team was established in autumn 2004 whose goal is to promote local involvement by monitoring and discussing matters and events concerning the neighbourhood. The team aims to foster community spirit within the building and its immediate surroundings, to improve co-operation between actors in the neighbourhood, and raise different themes. It also aims to improve the flow of information about its own operations and those within the

building. Its objectives are to reduce disturbing behaviour and increase the safety of inhabitants and other actors. In 2006, the chosen theme was safety.

The pre-primary school has implemented several educational programmes and has participated in different projects for educational purposes, among them the *Moniku Project* (support for multicultural children), the *Youth Against Drugs (YAD) Project* (support programme for leisure time) and the *Evaluation of School Readiness*. More information about these projects is given in Appendix 2.

The district

The district contains a large number of immigrant children and children of low socio-economical background. The pre-primary school was eager to develop its operations and because of its high immigrant ratio it has received more support from the City of Helsinki than the average pre-primary school. 58% of the children are from immigrant backgrounds representing 14 countries: Somalia, Russia, Japan, Iraq, Iran, Thailand, Liberia, Vietnam, Egypt, the UK, Estonia, Brazil, Hungary and Palestine. Table 4 presents the socio-economic statistics of the district. The numbers in bold represent the highest figures in Helsinki.

Table 4. Socio-economic summary of the pre-primary school district (Statistics Finland 2006).

Socio-economic summary of the pre-primary school district		
Variable	By number	By%
Population of area	36,255	-
0–6-year-olds	2,895	8.0%
7–15-year-olds	3,995	11%
16–18-year-olds	1,353	3.7%
Families with children	5,394	-
Single-parent families	2,024	38% of families with children
Average size of families	2.76	-
Swedish speakers	1,253	3.5%
Other languages	5,297	14.6%
Unemployment rate		13.2%
Rented apartments	9,495	50.9%
Child welfare claimants	863	10.5%
Subsistence subsidy claimants	5,200	14.3%

Regardless of its challenges, the pre-primary school has achieved successful results, signifying that almost every parent brings their children to the pre-primary school, parents actively co-operate with the pre-primary school personnel, and the pre-primary school has efficient co-operation with the school. The children also attain the goals set for pre-primary school children of 5–6 years of age. In Finland children aged 5–6 attend pre-primary school (from 2015, it is mandatory to attend pre-primary education) and the aim is to learn social skills like working in groups

and working under direction. They also have the chance to learn to read and calculate, although this is not obligatory at this stage.

4.1.2 Participants

Each year, 27 interviews were carried out. Tables 5 and 6 list the persons interviewed in 2008 and 2009. Below is an explanation of the interview codes:

Relative (R), Child (C), Teacher (T), Organisation member (O), Administration member (A), Group interview member, professionals at day care (G), Interview (I), Female (F), Male (M), Interview area (L)

Number of interview (1–27). The 27 interviews given each year are numbered according to the order in which they were made. Making an interview appointment with professionals was challenging and the appointment time often changed. Group interviews have been given their own numbering. Examples of interview codes: “child’s Relative, Interview, Female, Interview area L, number of interview 1. **RIFL1**”.

Table 5. Interviewees 2008.

Research Tool	Code	Position	Organisation
13 standardised open-ended interview	AIFL9	Pre-primary school area director	City of Helsinki
	AIML10	Pre-primary school manager	Selected school
		Pre-primary school development consultant	City of Helsinki
		Area special pre-primary school teacher	City of Helsinki
		Primary school head master	Selected school
5 representatives of community organisations	OIFL21	Member of key team	City of Helsinki
	OIFL22	Area teacher for Finnish as a second language	City of Helsinki
	OIFL23	Pre-primary school teacher, member of key team	Selected school
	OIFL24	School psychologist	Selected school
	OIFL25	Special teacher at primary school	Selected school
	TIML19	Special pre-primary school teacher	Selected school
3 professionals working in the local project	TIFL20	Pre-primary school teacher for foreign language	Selected school
	TIFL27	Pre-primary school teacher	Selected school
	RIFL1	Parent	Selected school
13 communicative daily life stories for end-users	RIFL2	Parent	Selected school
	RIML3	Parent	Selected school
	RIFL4	Parent	Selected school

7 pupils, 5–6 years old	RIFL5	Parent	Selected school
	RIFL6	Parent	Selected school
	CIML13	Pupil	Selected school
	CIML14	Pupil	Selected school
	CIFL15	Pupil	Selected school
	CIFL16	Pupil	Selected school
	CIFL17	Pupil	Selected school
	CIML18	Pupil	Selected school
1 communicative focus group 1 group of 6–10 professionals working in the local project	CIFL19	Pupil	Selected school
	TGFL8		Selected school
		Resource special pre-primary school teacher	Selected school
		Pre-primary school nanny	Selected school
		Pre-primary school manager	Selected school
		Pre-primary school nanny	Selected school
		Pre-primary school teacher	Selected school
		Pre-primary school teacher	Selected school

Table 6. Interviewees 2009.

Research Tool	Code	Position	Organisation
13 standardised open-ended interview	AIFL9	Pre-primary school area director	City of Helsinki
5 representatives of administration	AIFL10	Pre-primary school manager	Selected school
	AIFL11	Pre-primary school development consultant	City of Helsinki
	AIFL12	Area special pre-primary school teacher	City of Helsinki
	AIML26	Primary school head master	Selected school
5 representatives of community organisations	OIFL21	Member of key team	City of Helsinki
	OIFL22	Area teacher for Finnish as a second language	City of Helsinki
	OIFL23	Pre-primary school teacher, member of key team	Selected school
	OIFL24	School psychologist	Selected school
	OIFL25	Special teacher at primary school	Selected school
	TIML19	Special pre-primary school teacher	Selected school
3 professionals working in the local project	TIFL20	Pre-primary school teacher for foreign language	Selected school
	TIFL27	Pre-primary school teacher	Selected school
	RIFL1	Parent	Selected school
13 communicative daily life stories to end-users	RIFL2	Parent	Selected school
	RIML3	Parent	Selected school

	RIFL4	Parent	Selected school
	RIFL5	Parent	Selected school
	RIFL6	Parent	Selected school
	RIFL7	Parent	Selected school
6 pupils, 5–6 years old	CIFL13	Pupil	Selected school
	CIML14	Pupil	Selected school
	CIFL15	Pupil	Selected school
	CIFL16	Pupil	Selected school
	CIFL17	Pupil	Selected school
	CIML18	Pupil	Selected school
1 communicative focus group	TGFL8		Selected school
1 group of 6–10 professionals working in the local project		Resource special pre-primary school teacher	Selected school
		Pre-primary school nanny	Selected school
		Pre-primary school manager	Selected school
		Pre-primary school nanny	Selected school
		Pre-primary school teacher	Selected school
		Pre-primary school teacher	Selected school

4.2 Gathering the Data

Data was collected by communicative open-ended interviews. The communicative approach means that in the interview situation the aim is to find a transformative aspect and it should be left in the hands of the individuals involved as much as possible (Flecha, 1999).

Data collecting methods were:

1. Communicative open-ended interviews with professionals
2. Communicative open-ended interviews with parents and children
3. Communicative focus group open-ended interviews with professionals

Topics for open-ended interviews (Appendix 1) were conducted from Includ-Ed project's earlier findings about successful actions towards inclusion (Includ-Ed, 2009).

Topics found to be important concerning inclusion were:

- a) **Types of participation and community involvement**
- b) **Improvements due to community involvement**
- c) **Different dialogic and democratic strategies facilitating the involvement of the community**
- d) **Family and community education**
- e) **Decision-making processes in school**

f) Curriculum and evaluation

g) Classrooms and learning spaces

27 interviews were carried out each year. Below is a list of persons interviewed during a one-year period (in 2008 and 2009, a total of 54 interviews).

- 13 open-ended interviews with professionals.

Three with teachers, two of whom were pre-primary school teachers and one of whom was a special education pre-primary teacher (in 2009, one teacher was not a Finnish national); five with representatives of other community organisations, including a regional teacher of Finnish as a second language, a project coordinator of the Youth Against Drugs (YAD) organisation, a coordinator of the local multicultural project MONIKU, a special education teacher and a primary school teacher; five with representatives of local administration, including a development consultant in pre-primary school, the school principal, the peripatetic special education pre-primary teacher, the pre-primary school district manager and the principal of the pre-primary school.

- 13 open-ended interviews with parents and children.

There were a total of 13 children (5–6 years old) and 13 parents (in 2008 six parents and seven children, in 2009 seven parents and six children) who participated in life story interviews. Interviewees were selected to be representative of the regional distribution, so about 50% of them were from a cultural background other than Finnish (in 2008, two parents were from Somalia and one from Russia, two children were from Somalia and one from Russia, and one from Iraq. In 2009, three parents were from Somalia, one child was from Somalia, and one child from Iraq). In some interviews a professional interpreter was used. Interviews with children allowed them to describe their daily life activities (the children were 5–6 years old).

- One open-ended focus group interview with professionals.

A total of five persons participated in open-ended interviews with the focus group, one of them being an administrative member and four of them teachers from the pre-primary school. Interview questions were based on communicative open-ended interviews with professionals (in 2008, two participants were multicultural and in 2009 one was multicultural).

Interviews were collected by the team from spring 2008 to the end of August 2008 and from spring 2009 to the end of August 2009. Altogether 54 interviews were carried out. Interviews with parents, children and teachers were conducted at the research pre-primary school. Interviews with professionals were made at their working places. I collected and transcribed half the interviews (interviews with

professionals) and the team collected the other half. The team consists of members who were early childhood professionals with a master's or bachelor's degree in early childhood education. Some of them were working for the University of Helsinki and some were students who were writing their master's theses for the University of Helsinki.

Interviews were made by appointment, and an interpreter was also used when needed. Parents and children were interviewed at pre-primary school, and professionals at their workplace. All the participants were asked about a convenient time for an interview. The interviews were open-ended, with topics being used as guidelines. As explained in the critical communicative methodology section, the interviews were like conversations in which the interviewers participated though the interviewer's tone was as neutral as possible. There were Instructions on conducting the interview given on the interview forms, see Appendix 1.

4.3 Ethical considerations of the study

Ethical considerations were taken into account from the outset of the study. The reason for the study was made clear to all participants, namely to improve inclusion and find supportive structures to aid inclusion. Anonymity was ensured to all participants. The fact that 24% of participants were children aged 5–6 years old was taken into consideration, and the differences in power positions between researcher and researched was also taken into account.

Ethical issues have been studied by Helena Helve (2005) in her longitudinal work in which young people were followed for a number of years. Helve points out that, particularly when sensitive issues are raised, researchers should ask themselves why a particular research is important and who benefits from it (Helve, 2005).

In this study, interviewees were made over a period of two years, in some cases the same people being interviewed in both years. Children were interviewed during the pre-primary school day in a quiet place. The interviewers were educated pre-primary school teachers who were not employed at the chosen pre-primary school and were conducted in a reassuring manner. I personally conducted all the interviews with professionals and analysed all the data. The importance of this particular research was explained to all the participants, namely that the aim was to improve the inclusive approach to pre-primary education and to uncover transformative, supportive structures to aid inclusion.

4.4 Data analysis

4.4.1 Content analysis

In this study a dialogue between data and theory formed the data analysis method, which was based on content analysis. Data analysis combines categories from theory background and categories that have arisen from the analysed material.

McMillan and Schumacher (1993, p.482) point out that when carrying out qualitative research there is no standard set of procedures for data analysis and for

keeping track of analytical strategies. “Although the data analysis is inductive, a deductive mode of thinking at appropriate times is used moving back and forth between analysing raw data and recasting tentative analyses at each phase of building to more abstract levels of synthesis. ‘Making sense’ of the data depends largely on the researcher’s intellectual rigour and a tolerance for tentativeness of interpretation until the entire analysis is completed” (McMillan & Schumacher 1993, p. 482).

Content analysis can also be used as a secondary or supplementary method in multi-method study. In this study, the content study can be seen as a main research method, but to increase validity and reliability I also used number-based analysis.

The history of content analysis

Content analysis developed in the twentieth century from a series of quantitative analyses, mainly from newspapers. “Content analysis is codified common sense, a refinement of ways that might be used by laypersons to describe and explain aspects of the world about them” (Robson 2002, p.352). Alasuutari (1999) has suggested that with qualitative studies it is important that material is first examined only from a certain theoretical and methodological point of view. Material should be analysed from the point of view of what is important to the selected theoretical background and for the research questions. The raw material analysed, namely the body of the text, is categorised and simplified to be made more understandable (Alasuutari, 1999; Robson, 2002).

Content analysis is most affected by the researcher’s own pre-understandings (Habermas, 1987). In other words, there is always some cultural, educational or other related understanding, and the human factor is always present. Content analysis can be carried out on very different documents; these documents can be interviews, letters, songs, advertisements, memos, and so on. In this study, content analysis was carried out using transcribed interviews.

Critical communicative methodology and content analysis

Critical communicative methodology was used in the EU project Includ-Ed. This study uses content analysis as a method, though it has adopted some of the elements of critical communicative methodology, such as transformative (T, supportive to inclusion) and exclusionary (E, unsupportive to inclusion) dimensions of the phenomenon. Critical communicative methodology focuses in particular on finding transformative and exclusionary dimensions concerning inclusion.

Critical communicative methodology and content analysis are very similar when it comes to the analysis of the data. When collecting data, critical communicative methodology has the criteria that the collecting event should be communicative and as equal as possible for all the parties involved in the research.

According to Robson (2002), the first analytic task of coding the materials involves not only assigning a code but also having a way of viewing it alongside other similarly coded data. In this study, I was able constantly to compare one analysis to others, i.e. previously analysed interviews. Robson (2002) notes that coding materials means that the researcher must decide, for example, what particu-

lar part or transcribed interview segment falls into the category of ‘requesting information’ or ‘expressing doubt’.

In this research decisions had to be made concerning what part of the transcribed interview segment falls into T categories and what falls into E categories (see the research questions for a more detailed explanation of T and E). These two sides of inclusion have also been noted in the British study *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion* carried out by Ainscow et al. (2006). This study showed that when developing inclusive practices both policies that promote inclusion and policies that undermine inclusion should be taken into account (Ainscow et al., 2006).

4.4.2 Generally about the reduction of the data

Data has to be reduced and, as Miles and Huberman (1994) point out, data reduction occurs continuously throughout the life of any qualitatively-oriented project. “Data reduction is not something separate from analysis; it is part of the analysis. The researcher’s decisions—which data chunks to code and which to pull out, which patterns best summarise a number of chunks, which evolving story to tell—are all analytic choices” (Miles & Huberman 1994, p.10).

In order to find the answer to the research question, the most prominent issues have received the most attention and been treated with special sensitivity. If, in an open-ended interview that takes about one hour, some issues are prominent, it can be concluded that they are important to the interviewees’ lives. Hundreds of pages of data, however, might lead the researcher to think that the data cannot be put into a manageable form. In addition, many interesting points not related to the topic under study often come up when analysing the data. In such cases, keeping the research question in mind is an essential aspect of content analysis. Even in the middle of chaos, the researcher must always be able to go back to the research tasks and only look for units of analysis that have specific relevance to them (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Depending on the research question, the unit of analysis can also be a letter, word, sentence, portion of pages or words, the number of participants in discussion or the time used for discussion. When starting the analysis, the researcher must also decide whether to analyse just the manifest content or the latent content as well. The aim with latent content is also to take notice of silence, sighs, laughter, posture, etc. (Robson, 2002).

This study reduced the data through a three-step analysis (see section 4.4.3). At each step a cut point was made.

Analysis unit

In this study, the analysis unit is a sentence or sentences expressing one issue. Normally, one or two sentences expressed a single issue, but sometimes three to five sentences were used. Finding issues in the transcribed interviews is the first task of categorisation.

Categorisation

When categorising a large amount of data, the categorisation must start from somewhere. In qualitative content analysis, classification can be made from theoretical background, it can arise from analysed material or it can be a combination of these (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). This study used a combination of them.

To help uncover transformative and exclusionary dimensions, predetermined selective categories were made (Appendix 3). In predetermined selective categories (which can also be called a categorisation matrix), these dimensions are separated according to categories which have been found to be important concerning inclusion. Predetermined selective categories are found to be important concerning inclusion according to previous studies in EU project Includ-Ed (INCLUD-ED, 2009).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), when processing large amounts of data, all material that belongs to one topic (category) is assembled in one place, such as a file folder. "Some topical categories, which are extracted from the conceptual framework, the research question or the researcher's personal knowledge, exist before the analysis begins" (McMillan & Schumacher 1993, p. 482). In this study the predetermined selective categories were those that existed before the analysis.

Analysis is then continued on the selected material and categories that have arisen from the selected material. These categories are called conceptual categories.

Usually content analysis is done by reading and rereading material until patterns or clusters emerge and the researcher gives them a name. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993), data analysis is an ongoing cyclical process which is integrated into all phases of qualitative research. "Inductive analysis means that categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed on data prior to data collection" (McMillan & Schumacher 1993, p. 480). This study uses both inductive and deductive ways of thinking, and the conceptual categories are those clusters or patterns that emerge from the data. It is worth noting that conceptual categorisation is related to open coding (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Analysis tool ATLAS.ti

In this study, the computer programme ATLAS.ti (ATLAS.ti. 5.0) was used as an analysis tool. The ATLAS.ti programme was an important tool when analysing results. The computer-based analysis produces an expanding system of memos about the data. This programme for qualitative analysis greatly facilitates the coding structure and helps the researcher keeps tabs on the various stages to achieve the final results (Robson, 2002). Computer analysis makes it possible to inductively analyse qualitative data, where data is examined at the level of single matters or issues and, from these, generalisations (or clusters) are derived, which this study calls conceptual categories.

In this research, the analysis of the data in 54 interviews was done by transcribing and codifying and by content analysis; the information was also put into numerical form. The data analysis is based on two interconnected phases of the

data in 2008 and 2009. All interviews in 2008 and 2009 are analysed separately, each year in one ATLAS.ti file, meaning a total of 27 interviews in each file. I read all the material through several times in each ATLAS.ti file. Firstly, for each year, the data was reduced using predetermined selective categories, so that quotations representing issues mentioned in predetermined selective categories were assembled under that category.

The analysis then continued by analysing only the predetermined selective categories with the largest numbers of quotations and then conceptual categories were formulated. Interviews are coded so that different agents can be identified. By this coding, it was possible to specify an agent's quotations by the results. Examples of analysis and explanation of interview codes are described in 4.4.3.

Display of the data

Data should also be displayed so that it can be understood. As Robson says, "you know what you display" (Robson, 2002, p.476). Miles and Huberman (1994) say that display is an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action. Display is important because humans are not very powerful as processors of large amounts of information, our cognitive tendency being to reduce complex information to selective and simplified gestalts or easily understood configurations (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this study information is displayed in Figures and Tables in order to form an overall understanding of the material.

Qualitative data analysed at a quantitative level

In this study, data has also been analysed at a quantitative level. In critical communicative methodology, it is possible to implement quantitative techniques and analyse quantitative data (Gómez et al., 2011). Although the method used in this study is content analysis, some of the elements of critical communicative methodology are adapted, such as combining quantitative with qualitative methods. When the material is large, number-based analysis condenses the information. The numbers themselves illustrate the information and if some issues are mentioned more often, they receive a higher number and the researcher can conclude that these often-mentioned issues are important concerning inclusion.

Miles and Huberman (1994) have considered the role of numbers in qualitative research. The authors argue that the hallmark of qualitative research is that it goes beyond how much there is of something to tell us about its essential qualities: "However, a lot of counting goes on in the background when judgements of qualities are being made. When we identify a theme or a pattern, we are isolating something that (a) happened a number of times and (b) consistently happens in a specific way. The 'number of times' and 'consistency' judgements are based on counting" (Miles & Huberman 1994, p.253).

Metsämuuronen (2006) has discussed the benefits when qualitative data has been found to be quantitative (mixed method research). The benefit of combining the methods is that the results produce more data for contemplation and for draw-

ing conclusions. It also makes it possible to obtain answers to questions which would have been impossible using only one method (Metsämuuronen, 2006).

4.4.3 Examples from data analysis and data reduction

When conducting content analysis, the researcher followed guidance from Miles and Huberman (1994), Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) and McMillan and Schumacher (1993). In all these research manuals, content analysis was divided into process steps.

These steps include data material reduction and data material clusterification, then results can be concluded on the basis of analysis. Below these steps are presented as generalisations on content-based qualitative analysis in a three-step process:

1. Source material **reduction**, cut point 1
2. Source material **clusterification**, grouping, patterns, compressed assembly of information, cut point 2
3. **Results**, cut point 3

Miles and Huberman (1994) define qualitative analysis as consisting of three concurrent flows of activities. These flows are data reduction, data display (compressed assembly of information) and conclusion. Analysis comes at the end of each activity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Figure 2 presents the “Process of inductive data analysis” and it also includes steps or phases, some of which occur at the same time (McMillan and Schumacher 1993, p.481). From the data, the next phase is topics or categories and then patterns. From patterns there are two ways to provide results, one which leads to understanding and one to grounded theory (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993). In this study, the aim was to form understanding. In some research manuals like Robson (2002), inductive analysis is seen as part of grounded theory. In this study, the analysis method is formed specially to fit this research and has combined both inductive and deductive ways of thinking.

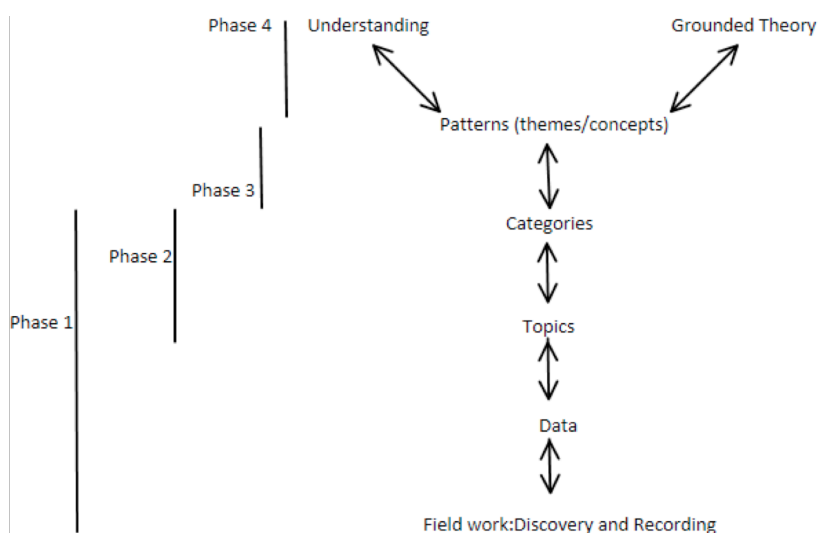


Figure 2. Process of inductive data analysis (McMillan and Schumacher 1993, p.481).

1st step, cut point 1

The first step in the analysis is to carry out reduction. This was done by predetermined selective categories based on the EU project Includ-Ed.

Predetermined selective categories are tools for analysis, put together by all the participant countries in the EU project Includ-Ed. When there is a large amount of material, predetermined selective categories help to place material in categories relevant to inclusion and also highlight if the quotation supports (transformative) or unsupports (exclusionary) inclusion. Predetermined selective categories consist of agents' quotations. Predetermined selective categories are found to be important concerning inclusion according to previous studies carried out in the EU project Includ-Ed (INCLUD-ED, 2009).

In this analysis step, the source material (about 1,500 pages of transcribed interviews, a total of 54 interviews) has been **reduced** (cut point) by distributing agents' quotations into 64 predetermined selective categories. After this analysis, the predetermined selective categories contain a total of 1,782 quotations. The following is an example of how the categories are used (see Appendix 3 for all the predetermined selective categories).

Below is an example of a quotation in the predetermined selective category—**promotion of inclusive practice**—which is transformative towards inclusion.

This example is transformative because participation is seen as positive.

Interviewer: *"What are the benefits of participating in pre-primary schools activities?"*

Interviewee: *"There are like more connected feelings, also on children's side because normally we are at work all day and only see the child in the evenings for a few hours, so it is nice to have happenings like this at the pre-primary school."* RIFL6

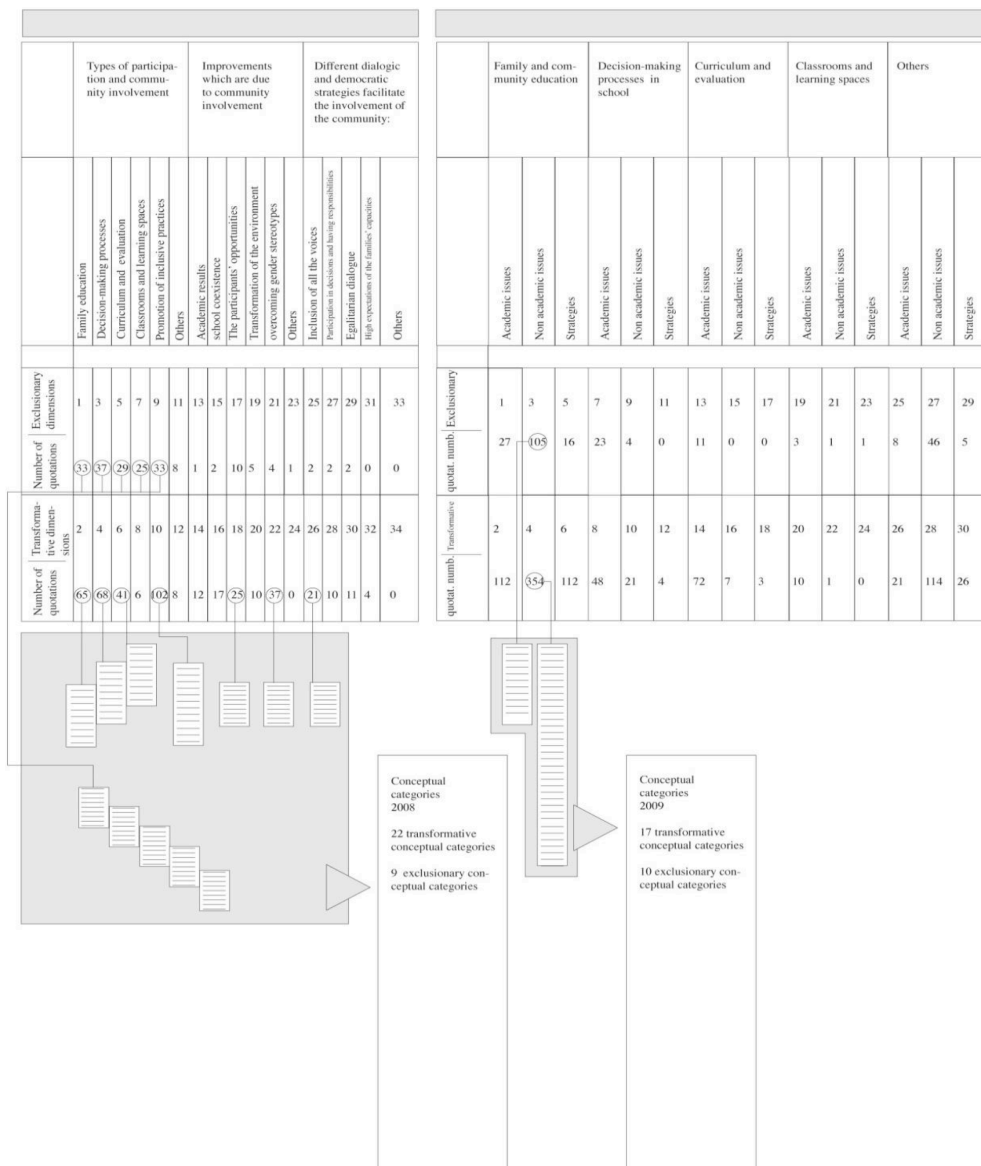


Figure 3. Data selection from predetermined selective categories (up) to conceptual categories (down). Appendix 3 shows predetermined selective categories more clearly.

2nd step, cut point 2

Figure 3 shows selection from predetermined selective categories to conceptual categories. Source material is **reduced** further by analysing only the predetermined selective categories with the largest number of quotations (circled quotation numbers). Limits (cut point) are made so that, 2008 predetermined selective categories were picked that received more than 20 quotations (circled on the top left in Figure 3). Picked from 2009 (circled on the top right in Figure 3), were a single predetermined selective category with the highest number of transformative quotations and

a single predetermined selective category with the highest number of exclusionary quotations. A total of 759 quotations were selected to be reanalysed.

These 759 quotations were taken and reanalysed by the researcher. In source material **clusterification**, 58 conceptual categories were formulated from 759 quotations (see data selection from predetermined selective categories to conceptual categories in Figure 3). Conceptual categories were formed by the researcher when rereading 759 quotations several times. When there were many similar quotations, the researcher created a conceptual category, which can be seen as a topic for the quotation group (see Tables 7 and 8 for all conceptual categories).

Below is an example of a quotation in the conceptual category **parents do not participate**, which is exclusionary towards inclusion.

The teacher replies:

"It is starting to be frustrating to arrange meetings because people do not participate, no matter what we are doing." TIFL27

Below is an example of a quotation in the conceptual category **good co-operation**, which is transformative towards inclusion.

The parent replies:

"Well, isn't it generally that we are in close contact with each other every day but it isn't written anywhere, but sure at least once a month we should talk longer about how things are going in the centre and how the kids are doing, so we know where we are going." RIFL1.

3rd step, cut point 3

To find an answer to the research question, the following limits (cut point) were made: in 2008, there were 22 T (transformative) conceptual categories and 9 E (exclusionary) conceptual categories. In 2009, there were 17 T (transformative) conceptual categories and 10 E (exclusionary) conceptual categories. To balance E and T accounts, 2 T and 2 E conceptual categories with the most quotations have been selected from both years. **Results** can be obtained from those 8 selected conceptual categories, containing 300 quotations.

From these 8 conceptual categories, answering types (agents) were separated.

4.4.4 Data analysis processes of this study presented in figures

To be able to make a data analysis for large amounts of material, the researcher used the data analysis method first by reducing material by carrying out data analysis based on predetermined selective categories for the whole data material, then by reducing material further by forming conceptual categories from the predetermined selective categories with most quotations received (see Figure 4).

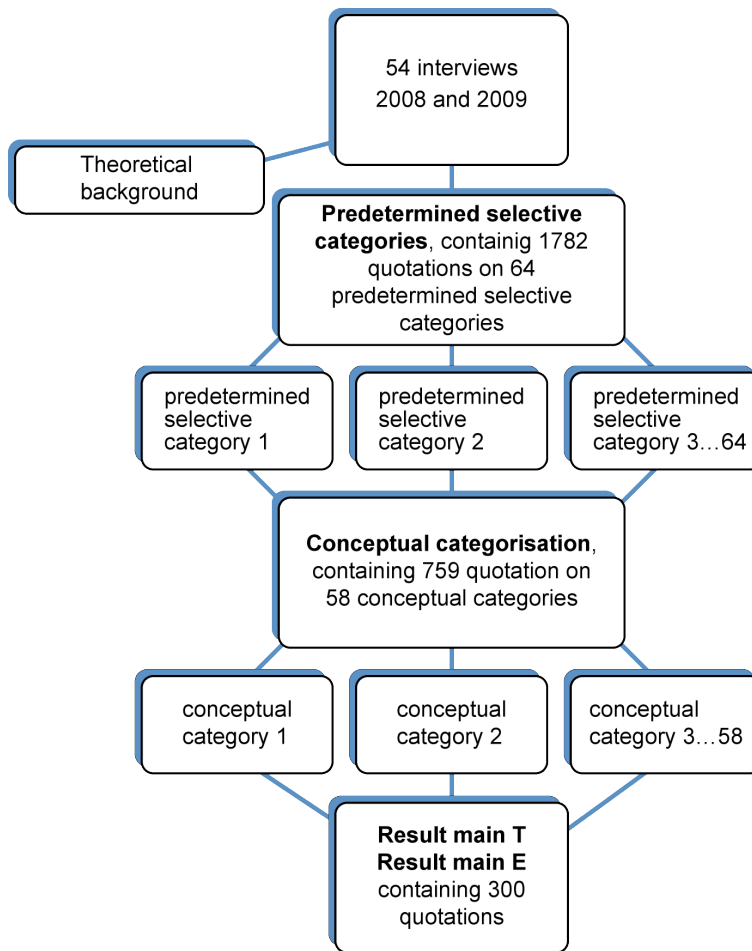


Figure 4. Data analysis of the study

Figure 5 shows the progress of this study in more detail. The transcribed interviews from 2008 and 2009 were analysed using 64 predetermined selective categories, then the predetermined selective categories with most quotations received were again analysed and 58 conceptual categories were formulated. From these, 8 conceptual categories (4 most transformative and 4 most exclusionary to inclusion) were selected for the results and were separated by answering types (agents).

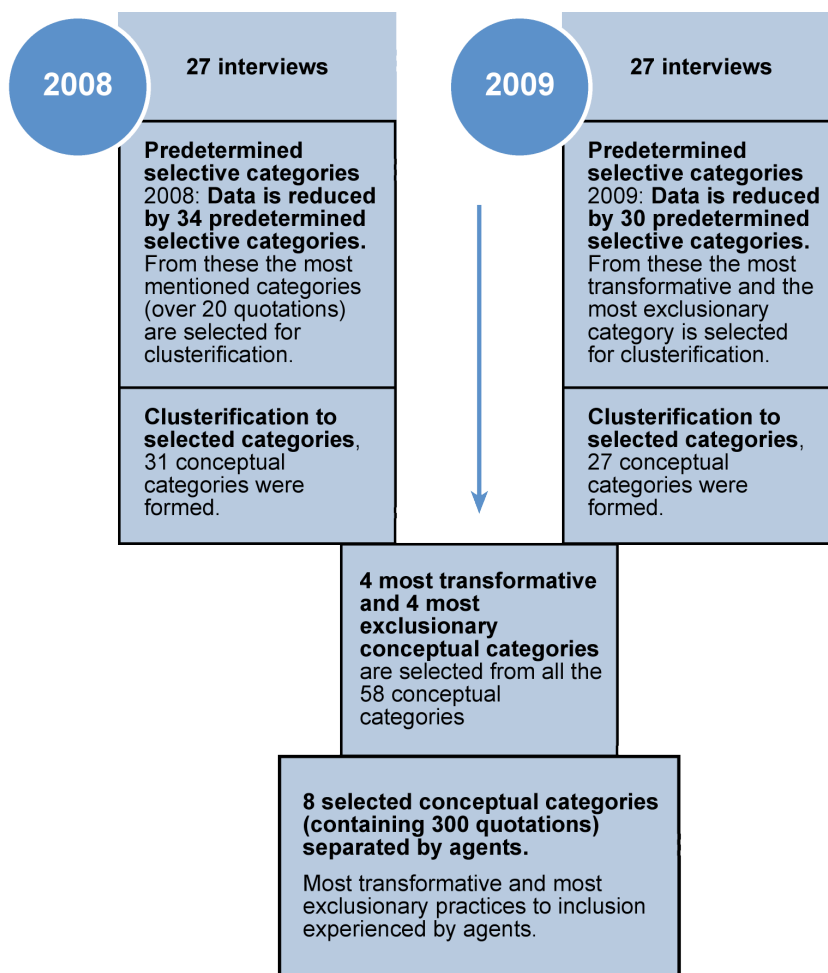


Figure 5. Progress of the study

4.4.5 Summary of the method

The method of this study was formulated from a simple idea about combining information so that it could be considered reliable. This led the researcher to use ready-made predetermined selective categories in reduction. In qualitative research, the number of data units often makes it difficult to obtain valid information. The number of data units is small because it is difficult for one person to analyse hundreds of pages of transcribed material.

To analyse large volumes of material, it is essential to have a computer program like ATLAS.ti, which was used in this study. When starting the reduction, however, it was important to have valid ready-made categories, so this study used the EU project Includ-Ed's ready-made predetermined selective categories, which were formed as a result of project 1 and were defined as being important to inclusion (INCLUD-ED, 2009). Content analysis also used dimensions in analysis. The

supportive dimension concerning inclusion is called transformative and the unsupportive dimension concerning inclusion and is called exclusionary.

This division into “good” and “bad” did help to highlight issues which are relevant to inclusion. In order, then, to know the most important issues, I used number-based selection and those items most often mentioned by each agent are the final results. The figures on the previous pages give an overall picture about the structure of this study. The researcher used three main research manuals as a guide when formulating the method: Miles and Huberman (1994), McMillan and Schumacher (1993) and Robson (2002). They provided instructions for content (or data) analysis, which included three steps as described earlier. Very important advice from Robson (2002) was “you know what you display”. Gaining an overall picture made it possible to obtain information.

5 Results

In the following, Tables 7 and 8 present all the conceptual categories from 2008 and 2009. These conceptual categories can be seen as inclusive practices experienced by agents. The results of this study are found in the bolded conceptual categories which received the most transformative and the most exclusionary quotations. Quotation examples agent by agent from the most quotations received in the conceptual categories are given in bold in Tables 7 and 8. Conceptual categories can be seen as topics, they are categorised roughly in Tables 7 and 8 to improve clarity.

Transformative conceptual categories are given at the top of Tables 7 and 8, and with exclusionary conceptual categories beneath them and a number showing the number of quotations. This means that the issue referred to in the conceptual category has been mentioned in the interviews as many times as the number shows.

Table 7. Conceptual categories 2008

(Conceptual categories with the highest number of quotations were selected for the results and are given in bold.)

Transformative conceptual categories related to different support methods (the number given represents the number of quotations related to this topic)	Transformative conceptual categories related to co-operation with parents (the number given represents the number of quotations related to this topic)
44 support to minority groups is available 20 co-operations with other organizations 13 communities can participate in the decision-making process 8 minority groups can work at educational centres 6 co-operations with educational centres helps overcome gender stereotypes 5 possibility for women to participate helps overcome gender stereotypes 3 both sexes working together helps equality 3 no prejudice about ethnic background 3 no prejudice between genders 2 co-operation with preschool and school 2 minority groups working at the educational centres help learning 1 enough resources	75 co-operation with parents 33 positive attitudes towards cooperation 30 parents' needs are well taking care of 14 curriculum is made together with parents 10 decisions are explained to parents 9 parents are active 6 evaluations are made together with parents 5 support given to parents 2 fathers do participate in the educational process 2 minority group parents are happy about the pre-primary school
Exclusionary conceptual categories related to parents (the number given represents the number of quotations related to this topic)	Exclusionary conceptual categories related to resources and communication (the number given represents the number of quotations related to this topic)
34 parents cannot participate 17 parents are not active 7 children do not want parents to participate 6 frustrations about co-operation with parents	23 not enough resources 14 no support to minority groups 13 communication problems 11 lack of information 4 no support given to Finnish children

Table 8. Conceptual categories 2009

(Conceptual categories with the highest number of quotations were selected for the results and are given in bold.)

Transformative conceptual categories related to encouragement and support methods (the number given represents the number of quotations related to this topic)	Transformative conceptual categories related to co-operation with parents (the number given represents the number of quotations related to this topic)
42 encouragement to participate 19 multicultural daycare/school is a good thing 18 inclusion increases academic results 15 good atmosphere at school/daycare 12 support to minority groups 11 good communication 10 education for immigrant parents 9 daycare/school has good attitude 8 positive feedback 8 multi-professional co-operation 4 multicultural staff helps with co-operation 3 respect for own culture	45 good co-operation 28 parents can participate 22 parenting partnership 10 participation has a positive effect 2 curriculum made together
Exclusionary conceptual categories related to parents (the number given represents the number of quotations related to this topic)	Exclusionary conceptual categories related to resources, information and negative attitude (the number given represents the number of quotations related to this topic)
25 parents do not participate 9 lack of co-operation 8 not a cohesive feeling 1 not enough encouragement	12 negative attitude of the parents 11 lack of information 4 negative image of the education centre 3 not possible to change things 3 lack of resources 2 lack of time

Conceptual categories with the highest number of quotations are categorized according to agents in Figure 6.

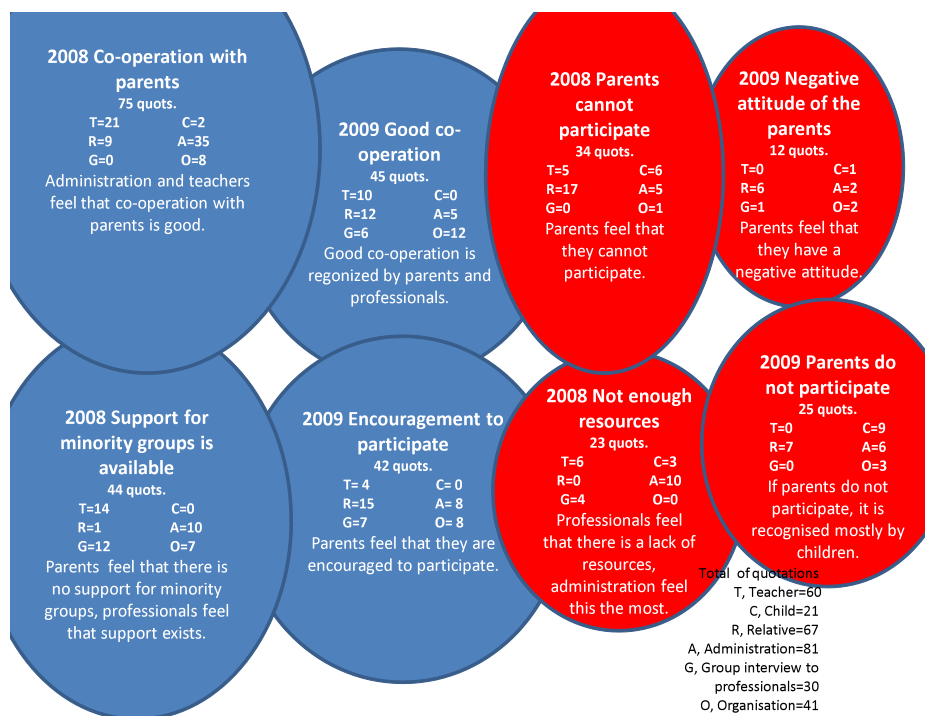


Figure 6. Eight conceptual categories which received the most T and the most E quotations, categorised by agents.

The most transformative practices for inclusion are marked in light grey on the left, and the most exclusionary practices are marked in dark grey on the right. Important transformative practices for inclusion are firstly co-operation with parents, secondly the fact that support for minority groups is available (mainly meaning immigrant groups), thirdly that there is encouragement to participate, and fourthly that there is good co-operation.

The following sections explain how the conceptual categories given in Figure 6 were categorised according to the agents. The quotations presented are examples of the quotation group content which were made by the computer program ATLAS.ti. It is impossible to present all the quotations analysed, so with these examples it can be understood what kind of quotations each quotation group consists of. More analysis about the results is given in section 5.3.

5.1 Transformative practices by agents

5.1.1 Transformative practices: children

The agent *child* received the most transformative quotations in the conceptual category “**co-operation with parents**”, meaning pre-primary schools co-operation with the child’s parents.

These quotations indicated how important the parents’ presence in pre-primary school is, and how the child talks about his/her parents in pre-primary

school events and everyday life. There is some problem with using the term ‘inclusive practice’ for children who are only 5–6 years old. For that reason the questions used were those which could be answered on the basis of the children’s daily routines.

Explanation of interview codes:

Relative (R), Child (C), Teacher (T), Organisation member (O), Administration member (A), Group interview member, professionals at the pre-primary school (G), Interview (I), Female (F), Male (M), Interview area (L)

Number of interview (1–27). The 27 interviews given each year are numbered according to the order in which they were made. Making an interview appointment from professionals was challenging and the appointment time often changed. Group interviews have been given their own numbering. Examples of interview codes: “child’s **Relative, Interview, Female, Interview area L, number of interview 1. RIFL1**”. The year of the quotation is not given to ensure interviewee anonymity.

Interview example:

“My father and mother have been here quite a lot, it’s a good thing.” CIFL15

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *“Okay, do you think there is any other programme for them (parents)?”*

Interviewee: *“Well for example singing”*

Interviewer: *“Okay what are they?”*

Interviewee: *“Well singing, first learning what to sing and then parents, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, or grandmothers or grandfathers come along. They come to watch there on the benches in a darkened room. They watch when we children perform.”* CIFL13

These quotations are examples about children’s quotations on ATLAS.ti about transformative practices. Parents are involved in school activities. This does not mean that parents participate in the normal everyday functions organised by the pre-primary school, but that parents take into account the child’s needs and activities. This means any kind of parental interest in the child’s pre-primary school. A parent’s interest may be simply asking every day what kind of day the child had at pre-primary school. Similarly, interest can mean that when the pre-primary school organises activities for families, at least one of the child’s parents participates in those events. Activities can, for example, be playground parties or events where children present some kind of programme, such as the singing described above.

5.1.2 Transformative practices: the family/relatives

The agent *family* received the most transformative quotations in the conceptual categories “**encouragement to participate**” and “**good co-operation**”.

When a child’s pre-primary school begins, parents may be uncertain and afraid to talk about school matters. At that stage, “encouragement to participate” is

important and supports the growth of the parents' self-esteem. Parents are encouraged to take the initiative and to participate more.

Interview example:

Interviewer: *"How are you encouraged to participate?"*

Interviewee: *"Well, it's that **we are in close contact every day**; at least once a month we talk longer about what has generally happened, so we hear where we are going. It also encourages me to say things when a member of staff starts to talk."* RIFL1

Interview example (multicultural):

Interviewer: *"How does co-operation with the pre-primary school affect you?"*

Interviewee: *"Yeah, **it increases my self-confidence**, when I can participate in this pre-primary school."* RIFL4

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *"Has there been support for your self-confidence?"*

Interviewee: *"Yes, it [the pre-school] has supported me and also **created more self-confidence**, because I have been actively cooperating with the pre-primary school in that way."* RIFL6

According to the quotations below, parents feel they are participating even when a member of staff tells them about the everyday things that happen at the pre-primary school, such as taking photographs of children playing and doing other things.

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *"How is the pre-primary school? Have parents been encouraged to participate in the activities at the pre-primary school?"*

Interviewee: *"They **encourage us a lot of the time**, and they inform us well about everything and ask if they can take pictures of the children when they're making a presentation or something."* RIFL4

If the parents receive an invitation to an event organised by the pre-primary school, and they come to the event, this can be considered participation. Even if parents do not take part in the debate they can take the part of active listeners. Parents may feel that the event is useful, even if they do not give feedback or talk at any particular occasion.

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *"In the autumn they had an event where Somali mothers and fathers were given the chance to discuss things."*

Interviewee: *"It is possible that it has been thought about, but it has not yet happened. Personally, I don't know. Last month, in March I was invited by the pre-primary school to a big event, which took place in Mellari [the local youth centre house]."*

Interviewer: *“Did the parents influence the proceedings? Were the parents consulted?”*

Interviewee: *“Yes, Finns, Somalis, everyone.”*

Interviewer: *“Did you get to tell your opinions?”*

Interviewee: *“Well I didn’t, I had no opinions, **but we talked about everything there; it was good, it is also useful.**”* RIFL4

Co-operation and communication can help to overcome the prejudices of parents towards the pre-primary school, and in such situations the pre-primary school staff should play an active role. As in the example below, if the child is often brought to or picked up late from the pre-primary school, guidelines and practices should be told to the parents in a positive way. Close co-operation between parents and the pre-primary school also means that pre-primary school practices can be agreed upon with the parents. If the parents always hear negative feedback about being late and never hear anything positive from the staff, the parents’ attitudes towards the pre-primary school will deteriorate.

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *“Does it matter if the parents have a lot of collaboration with the pre-primary school, so that there is a better image of the pre-primary school?”*

Interviewee: *“Yes, it can be affected. **When home and the pre-primary school co-operate, all goes well.** Then maybe it will change preconceptions. Maybe preconceptions are created when parents understand their right and their duty, for example, when pre-primary school starts and ends. For example, children must be collected before three [o’ clock]. If the parents are always late, negative feedback should come immediately, because parents have not met their obligation. I have talked to some other parents who believe that this pre-primary school is bad. First, parents should tell the staff if they are going to be late. Pre-primary school should be in close co-operation with them.”* RIFL4

In situations when staff gives parents feedback about a child’s behaviour, there is a high risk of misunderstanding, especially if the parent’s language skills are weak. The aim of the staff is to ensure the safety of the children and to support their co-operative skills and growth. Consequently they should make it clear, especially to multicultural parents, that giving feedback about a child’s behaviour is for the good of the child, and that talking about this is a way for the pre-primary school to gain closer co-operation with parents.

Below is an example of encouragement to participate in which the parent wants to hear feedback and talk about matters relating to the child.

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *“How does the pre-primary school encourage parents to participate in the activities of the pre-primary school?”*

Interviewee: *“They inform us here in the pre-primary school on a daily basis. It’s an important thing. Telling about, for example, a child’s good behaviour... or if the child has bullied someone. For example, if a member of staff tells about bad behaviour, his/her aim is to minimise this bad behaviour. And similarly when a member of staff gives good news to parents, it’s encouraging and will make the parents very happy. Many parents do not like that bad things are told about their children, but I’m someone who wants to hear both sides.”* RIFL5

Various family events organised by the pre-primary school are perceived as a good thing. However, parents are mostly working and busy, so if events are not organised parents are not likely to request them.

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *“Do you think that with those who do not have much co-operation, should these discussions only be for one family or more families in the same conversation?”*

Interviewee: *“I think it would be good to have different cultural evenings in which parents were invited to discuss how important it is to be active and to have co-operation between home and pre-primary school, but it is fine with us as it is.”* RIFL6

According to the respondents, from the family’s point of view, the most transformative practice for inclusion is encouragement to participate, such as the parent’s reply “we are in close contact every day”. This means that families are encouraged to participate in the activities of the pre-primary school, and can do this through good communication between home and the pre-primary school. To give one example, when parents come to fetch their children, the staff can speak spontaneously with them and initiate a discussion. Moreover, for some parents being part of events without taking part in discussions is sufficient.

5.1.3 Transformative practices: teachers/the school

The agent *teacher* received the most transformative quotations in the conceptual categories “**support for minority groups is available**” and “**co-operation with parents**”. These quotations show that there is a wide range of different support functions concerning minority groups.

When a child from an immigrant background starts at pre-primary school or school, there may be a number of new things that the family faces for the first time. In particular, when the language skills of the parents are not good, then it is teachers or staff at the pre-primary school who should give a helping hand and guide parents to ensure that all matters relating to their child are taken care of.

Interview example:

“We have special programmes here in the neighbourhood, pre-primary school staff can be trained to be leaders of support groups for parents. It is all about supporting co-operation with both the parent and the child. We also do a lot normal everyday

things with parents if they need help. We find telephone numbers, sometimes we [the staff of the pre-primary school] even make telephone calls for parents when it is a question of the child. But we need the co-operation of the family to be able to help the child.” TIFL27

As the reply below shows, there are many different activities aimed at supporting minority groups involving not only teachers and schools but also other agents like parents and the community. The teacher’s comment below shows the active role of teachers and schools in sharing information and aiming at common goals.

Interview example (multicultural):

*“Morning coffee and afternoon coffee are arranged when **we want to see and talk about the children** and see normal everyday life, children playing and at the same time we can discuss. We have an immigrant project Cassandra, in which outsiders are invited, maternity clinics and other collaborative work with the ‘Kortteleiden talo’ [Quarters’ house]. We had the playground voluntary work yesterday, for example, then the multicultural weeks have been arranged either by us or at someone else’s request.” TGFL8*

To support minority groups, teachers and schools also need to educate themselves. The following example shows that education is available for the issue at the research pre-primary school and that teachers interact actively with parents to help and support them with child care problems.

Interview example:

*“Family Education has **daily discussions** with parents about bringing and picking up children. The Education Forum in the autumn and spring discusses child-related issues. It also deals with family activities and ways of working with the child. There are parents’ morning coffee and discussion between two groups of parents. Twice this year, we have had meetings of mothers from Somalia, like discussion groups, where child care problems and other issues have been talked through.” TILF27*

Here is an example of inclusive practice where immigrant parents are working at the pre-primary school.

Interview example:

*“We are investing in an educational partnership with immigrant families and families with problems at home. We have had the possibility to organise various activities where there has been an interpreter. **Immigrant mother meetings** have taken place a couple of times, and we have also employed two immigrant mothers to work here. It supports the community and integrates them into this society.” TGFL8*

For special-needs children there are many different support models, and in addition the teacher can be innovative in finding different ways to support language skills, as recounted below.

Interview example:

Interviewer: *“What are the support measures for a special-needs child?”*

Interviewee: *“Well, we have an assistant, a special system and group-size reduction.”*

Interviewee: *“We have small group activities or then individual activities. We use pictures a guide, such as with practical activities. **Or whatever can be done to help with speech.**”* TGML8

Interview example:

“Here, too, there has been a strong step forward when in the parents’ evening the importance of the child’s own mother tongue was discussed. It has to be strong advice so that parents understand the situation and quick progress can be made because of that.” TIFL19

The most transformative practice for inclusion from a teacher’s/school’s point of view is that support for minority groups is available. Research shows that there have been special programmes for pre-primary schools with the aim of supporting parents. Support for minority groups can also mean in practice that, for example, an interpreter is available when needed. From several interviews it became clear that daily discussions with parents are very important. In Finland, parents’ opinions are taken into account when creating the child’s early childhood education plans, and pre-primary school also aims to take the whole family situation and the child’s individual development into account.

5.1.4 Transformative practices: administration/ the community

The agent *administration* received the most transformative quotations in the conceptual categories **“co-operation with parents”**, **“good co-operation”** and **“support for minority groups is available”**. For example, the “Hand in hand” method supports interaction between parents and children.

Interview example:

“Yes we have sorts of family schools, called ‘Käsikynkkä’. It’s quite popular. At least three pre-primary school have these. They have these groups for their families whenever needed.” AIML10

Together with parents, a pre-primary school can set a common educational goal, and to achieve it both family and the pre-primary school work together.

Interview example:

*“The way in which pre-primary school is working goes with the **idea of an educational partnership**. I mean, seeking to establish a kind of a common vision, meaning that we have a common thing, and then the family manages on its own and does things on its own.”* AIFL9

Interview example:

*“Each unit has its own plan for early childhood education and children have their own VASU [Plan for Early Childhood Education]. We think, therefore, that **an educational partnership** has three stages in which the perspective of the child is considered, and then there is the parent perspective, and the perspective of the childcare and educational staff. But then, in addition, if we think about family work, we have indeed areas where there are still other families who need support in educational work. And so, we have now from the beginning of the year really got started on five different areas with, for example, family workers working in pre-primary school. Such a project will be monitored for a couple of years to see what the approach should be. This concerns pre-primary school staff, but also special staff providing services for families with small children, **staff of the early support team**.”* AIML10

Interview example:

*“Now a new project is just starting. It has been formed to seek out a suitable course of action. Maybe working in a few pre-primary school on different days of the week. Then there is the **possibility for the parents to discuss** different situations related to family life with these professional people. Or then there can be a family group in which parents can take part acting as a peer group. But it is a good arena of action, it is easy to come along, there’s a low threshold. It is a natural place to come and meet each other.”* AILF11

Interview example:

*“Although, we have to say that **we’ve received really good pedagogical methods and materials from the special pre-primary school**, like those picture-aid and other programmes, for general use and use in groups. As you know, they have always been in place, but are a bit lazily used perhaps. But now when we have these children from immigrant backgrounds, now it is like we need to use these methods”* AIFL9

Interview example:

*“We are trying to organize ability groups, we are **aiming at inclusive activities**, we consider the activities which are necessary. **We will open discussions with parents and say why this is being done**. My work relates to finding children who need special support, and to ensure that discussions will be explained if there is a need for more examination.”* AIML10

Interview example:

“So, I am operating in three areas as a consultant for pre-primary school teachers on Finnish as a second language . It basically means that there is a sort of a task to take care of immigrant pupils. They will be from different pre-primary school these Finnish as a second language teachers and I am the contact person. Then we have training at the autumn for pre-primary school staff, and then there are language consultation visits where you see how the children’s language skills are progressing.” OIFL22

Most of the replies focus on different ways of co-operating between the community or administration and parents. From the point of view of the community/ admini-

stration, co-operation with parents is the most transformative practice for inclusion, as is also the case from the child's point of view. The results revealed that the administration representatives feel that educational partnership is important as is the opportunity for parents to discuss and ask questions. The community and administration are also responsible for preventing exclusion, and there the number of organisations involved also plays an important role.

Administration also faces challenges when the number of immigrant children rises. As one interviewee reported, they have knowledge about support methods (like using aid pictures), but they have only recently been introduced.

There were no multicultural representatives for the agent community/administration.

5.2 Exclusionary practices by agents

5.2.1 Exclusionary practices: children

The agent *child* received the most exclusionary quotations in the conceptual categories “**parents don’t participate**” and “**parents cannot participate**”.

Interview example (multicultural):

Interviewer: *“Well, what about your parents? Do they participate in pre-primary school activities?”*

Interviewee: *“No, **they haven’t been here.**”* CIFL15

Interview example:

Interviewer: *“Have your parents been here when a programme for parents has been organised?”*

Interviewee: (Shaking head). CIML14

Interview example (multicultural):

Interviewer: *“Do you remember the meeting you had last autumn, a meeting with your mum and the teacher to plan what you should learn in pre-primary school? Do you remember that you had that kind of discussion?”*

Interviewee: (Shaking head). CIFL17

Interview example:

Interviewer: *“Who makes the decisions on pre-primary school?”*

Interviewee: *“Adults.”*

Interviewer: *“Teachers?”*

Interviewee: *“Yes.”*

Interviewer: *“What things do they decide?”*

Interviewer: *"They tell what to do."*

Interviewer: *"Can children at all decide what to do?"*

Interviewee: *"They can decide what to play."*

Interviewer: *"So everything else is adults who decide?"*

Interviewee: *"Yeah, and take care [of things]." CIML13*

Parents' lack of participation is the most exclusionary practice for inclusion from the child's point of view. This may mean that parents do not ask how the child's day went, or **the parents do not attend the events** organised by the pre-primary school, and do not show any interest in the child's pre-primary school. Children do not remember or do not know about his/her own personal studying plan, which is made yearly with parents and teachers, although the child is also present on those occasions. It should be noted that there are not a particularly large number of children's responses, and the conceptual categories "parents don't participate" and "parents cannot participate" comprised most of the children's exclusionary quotations.

5.2.2 Exclusionary practices: the family/relatives

The agent *family* received the most exclusionary quotations in the conceptual categories "**parents cannot participate**" and "**parents do not participate**".

These responses indicate that parents are not aware of all the activities and plans at the pre-primary school. Nor do parents have to convey their wishes or communicate their desires to pre-primary school personnel. The reasons for this were not revealed in this research but there may be several different reasons relating to the parents' background and situation.

Interview example:

Interviewee: *"Well, I have taken my daughter to pre-primary school in the mornings, but we cannot influence what happens there. I have thought that they would tell me in the mornings, but it is like a secret."* RIFL4

Interview example:

Interviewee: *"Well, yes, possibly.... **Well, they never asked me** that kind of things at least. They have had only those group sessions, which people have gone to, but it's not for me, it has not been agreed with me and I have not said anything about it. I don't know, like other parents I don't have to. I suppose their views may be expressed of course, but I guess that the biggest decisions come from somewhere else."* RILF4

Parents may also tell about their wishes concerning their children's pre-primary school placement or educational plans, but as below, co-operation with the pre-primary school is not what some parents want or, for some reason, the parents' wishes simply are not fulfilled.

Interview example:

Interviewer: *“So how is co-operation working for example in situations where children are divided into groups?”*

Interviewee: *“**It did not work in our case.** I did try to change, but it was impossible. I would have liked to move my daughter to another group because all her friends are there, those she met when she was just 9 months old. So I don’t think there is not much possibility to influence things.”* RILF2

Interview example (multicultural):

Interviewer: *“Would you like to influence the contents of this curriculum?”*

Interviewee: *“Yes, sure, **the curriculum**, which is organised at the pre-primary school, yes sure, that it is quite suitable for children. But preferably it is the children who are in the pre-primary school group. That’d be a good thing, that’ll involve more. Next autumn my child will go to school, and it was said that if they focus more on writing and reading and some mathematical things, it would make it easier when he goes to the first class. But even if we as parents present such ideas, **there is a plan, which the school office has made about that.**”* RIFL5

For example, long working hours can prevent parents from participating in events organised by the pre-primary school, or then parents are waiting for the pre-primary school to operate as an initiator and ask parents to attend.

Interview example:

Interviewer: *“But generally speaking, do parents participate in their young child’s activity, and how?”*

Interviewee: *“**Quite little. They do not have much time**, yeah, no time, so it goes. People will take their child to pre-primary school at 7 and then at 4–5 bring them back home.”* RIFL1

Interview example:

“I haven’t participated in any educational sessions or any events. Also I don’t remember any time that I would have been asked to participate or follow my child’s day here at the pre-primary school.” RIFL2

Interview example:

Interviewer: *“There has been something, meetings about these immigrant mothers, and their peers, are they then motivated?”*

Interviewee: *“For immigrant mothers, yeah, yeah, but you should be able to get them all together, all the mothers, so until then we can talk about that and all mix together here.”* RIFL1

From the family’s point of view, the fact that parents cannot participate is the most exclusionary practice. This means that parents feel that they do not have an opportunity to influence issues concerning their child’s pre-primary school. Parents feel

that their voices will be not heard and that decisions are made somewhere else. One parent also worried about the curriculum and whether their child had sufficient ability before starting school. They may also presume that, whatever they might do, things will not change or improve. Issues parents' want to improve may be minor wishes related to the pre-primary school, like their own child's individual needs being considered in practice, for example, or moving their child to another group where all his or her friends are.

5.2.3 Exclusionary practices: teachers/the school

The agent *teacher* received the most exclusionary quotations in the conceptual categories “**not enough resources**” and “**parents cannot participate**”.

These responses show that teachers and schools are working within a framework which has insufficient resources for new, rapidly changing challenges. The situation of children and families is changing constantly. Projects, special educational needs and multiculturalism will present multiple challenges that staff need to cope with, even if resources are not readily available.

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“These days, problems with coping at work and resource issues are very important. On the other hand, everyone sees and knows the advantages of providing children and families with whatever they need. It also helps us, everyday workers. Life is sometimes challenging in our field. **Staff are often working at their very limit**, and the idea of having more work, for example in the evenings, is very difficult.”* TIFL27

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“**I would say that the resource situation sounds better than what it actually is.** We have three educators in a group of small children, and then we've got a special assistant because of three special-needs children. In total there are five children with special-needs status in a basic group. Morning assistants are in their groups because we have the opportunity to use the resources of afternoon clubs, but that is not an everyday thing. The basic number is three educators in a group of 22 children. It should be 21, but we constantly have more children than we have places. It is just a resource issue.”* TGML8

Interview example (multicultural):

Interviewee: *“We have a lot of kids who know how to be nice, but then these others take all of the attention. Then others who also need attention get ignored [receive less attention].”* TGFL8

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“The **resource situation is always a problem.** Some children need more support and some less. We have integrated special-needs children. They might have a speech disorder or they don't speak Finnish because they are multicultural. Then when talking about special-support children, they are often child-care children [chil-*

dren who have been taken by social workers from their home, because parents have not been able to raise them].” TGML8

Interview example:

“I think the curriculum is an information unit which is primarily intended for school purposes. It is our teachers’ manual. Parents have the right to read it, of course; it is available on the school website. But the content they cannot control, because it comes from us, from above. I think it is good that parents are not listened to in this particular matter.” TIFL27

The most exclusionary practice for inclusion from the teacher’s/school’s point of view is insufficient resources. Staff are generally well motivated and trained and would like to do their job as well as possible. However, there is a limit to what people can do. As one interviewee said, staff are often working at their limit. There is also a concern about those children how do not receive sufficient attention. They can be so-called ‘normal’ or children needing special support, but they still require attention and care.

5.2.4 Exclusionary practices: administration/the community

The agent *administration* received the most exclusionary quotations in the conceptual categories “**not enough resources**” and “**parents do not participate**” according to the analysis.

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“**Everything has to go within the budget** we have. Then the question is that we have to choose whether to purchase paper, toys and tools for play action, or to put money into conversing with parents.” AIML10*

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“So **the threat is there at all times**. Five years ago, we had the largest boom in closing down, if you could say so. Here too, four pre-primary school units were closed down in just a few years. And when you think about it on a regional level, as an area we are not terribly big, so that represents a big number [of closures]. And its consequences then, well, we are still trying to patch things up. In our area, it is pretty hard for families to get exactly the pre-primary school place that they want.” AIFL9*

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“The government does not necessarily participate. Parents can participate in and influence things. Consideration is given to the parents’ opinion in all workings of the school. We have the same worry as families too: **do children learn enough** Finnish, and this indeed came out in a conversation with Somali mothers. Together we try to find solutions which would guarantee learning.” AIML10*

Another point made was that Projects and development ideas have been thought out, but it was impossible to find resources and promoters to realise them.

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“Yes, **it is a resource, the most important thing.** If you have a project like that which requires time, it can also be a little difficult to get time to do it. After all, staff need to be with children. And despite everything, every day we still face situations where staff should work on some project, but children can never, ever be left alone. Yes, then we should be pretty clear with basic things. We are following user rates, meaning that all the time it is being monitored how many children we have.”* OIFL22

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“Yes, we’re really talking about running a homework club; it didn’t take place this year, **because we didn’t get the resources.** Afternoon activities might be there; we have only had a couple of them. Whether it is for the organisation, an association, a single parent or someone’s afternoon activities; if you just find a provider, we would be there to help out.”* OILF25

Interview example:

“We should get parents to talk with us, but we cannot deal with all the parents immediately. Of course, there may be a parent who has a very difficult substance abuse problems or drug dependence. So in these cases there are strong self defences and it requires lengthy and many, many discussions and many stages before progress can be made.” AIFL11

Interview example:

“Yes, we have to increase parents’ participation. This action is something that we need to make stronger, in order to see parents in a different way. If you compare Finland with other countries it’s still a minor thing.” AIFL11

The responses indicate that administration and the community are aware of a lack of resources, and they have the responsibility to decide where the scant resources are directed. The concern about children’s benefits emerges from these responses.

Insufficient resources is the most exclusionary practice from the point of view of the community/administration, as was the case in the teacher’s/school’s views. This issue came up several times in interviews with administration and organisation representatives. They have to make decisions when allocating scant resources. The basic needs of safety and health care come first, of course. After these, matters that need to be handled flexibly are, for example, the size of groups at pre-primary school, and adequate information for all. Management is in a difficult position, because they receive money on the basis of political decision-making and, on the other hand, the need for resources continues to grow in the field. Also day cares are beginning to change their attitudes towards involving parents more in day care.

There were no multicultural representatives in the agent community/administration.

5.3 Analysis and summary of the findings

Clearly the most important exclusionary practice is that parents cannot participate. The other most important exclusionary practices are that parents do not participate, that there are not enough resources, and that parents have a negative attitude.

At the very beginning of the analysis, there were about 1,500 pages of transcribed material from a total of 54 interviews (the given page number is an average because the transcribed interviews are in different fonts and all the data is in the ATLAS.ti programme). With such a large amount of data, information had to be condensed in some way.

To limit the data, predetermined selective categories were used and **1,782** quotations were taken for **64** predetermined selective categories. From those 64 predetermined selective categories the most important ones (the most often mentioned ones containing **759** quotations) were reanalysed and conceptual categories were formulated to summarise information and, as a result, **58** conceptual categories were formulated. From these **8** conceptual categories were selected, **the four most transformative and the four most exclusionary** containing **300** quotations.

Below are some comments about different agents' quotations. Comments were formulated during the research process.

Quotations on Administration + Organisation members as transformative

Administration members felt that co-operation with parents is the most supportive practice for inclusion. They are aware of the situation and are trying to do the best they can. They are active with other organisations in the area and they realise the importance of co-operation with parents. Like in interview example below, educational partnerships are highlighted.

Interview example:

"The way in which pre-primary school works goes hand in hand with the idea of an educational partnership. I mean, seeking to establish a kind of common vision, meaning that we have a common goal, and then the family manages on its own and does things on its own." AIFL9

Quotations on Administration + Organisation members as exclusionary

Some administration members stated that sometimes goodwill projects can cause some harm when they come to an end. The project may have been of good quality, but when funding and the project time runs out, there are little or no resources to continue the good practices the project has recommended. The project may, for example, have hired an adviser or organized activities that would have been part of everyday operations, while standard resources were directed towards the continuing needs of multi-cultural and special needs' children. When the project ends, it is

difficult to go back to the normal routine. Resources are often the problem, as the following interview suggests.

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“Everything goes within the budget we have. Then the question is that we have to choose whether to purchase paper, toys and tools for play activities, or put money into conversing with parents.”* AIML10

Quotations on Teacher + Group interview for professionals as transformative

Teachers at the day care and other staff have a professional approach to education and a good educational background. They have also received training courses related to immigrant issues. Due to the high immigration percentage the target pre-primary school has received additional resources from the city of Helsinki. In practice, this means more staff. Some of the staff have an immigrant background, and they have been a valuable help when organising discussions with immigrant parents like the immigrant mothers’ meetings.

Interview example:

“We are investing in educational partnership with immigrant families and families with problems at home. We have been able to organise various activities where there has been an interpreter. The immigrant mothers’ meetings have taken place a couple of times, and we have also employed two immigrant mothers to work here. It supports the community and integrates them into this society.” TGFL8

Quotations on Teacher + Group interview for professionals as exclusionary

Teachers reported that if the staff at the pre-primary school act as an integration assistant to a multi-cultural family, they simply in practice lack the time to their normal job. One practical example is that staff may act as an interpreter and provide information about basic living issues to a multi-cultural family. Most often, it is a pre-primary school that for immigrant families represents the first link to the community, before the parents have found jobs. However, pre-primary school staff cannot be responsible for all the information which a multi-cultural family requires.

In the world of pre-primary school, the need for haste and the ever-increasing number of challenges mean that staff have to prioritize their needs on a day-to-day basis. For parents, this may seem like unequal treatment, which increases conflicts between parents and administration. Due to the shortage of pre-primary school resources, children with normal levels of development may receive less attention, while children with special needs or developmental delays will receive comparatively more attention. Some children act as a model for normal language development, which can be a good thing, but the needs of all children should be taken into account.

Interview example:

Interviewee: *“These days, problems with coping at work and resource issues are very important. On the other hand, everyone sees and knows the advantages of providing children and families with the things they need. It also helps us, everyday workers. Life is sometimes challenging in our field. Staff often work to their limits, and the idea of having more work, for example in the evenings, is very difficult.”* TIFL27

Quotations on Relative as transformative

Parents report, according to the results, that they are encouraged to participate in their children’s pre-primary schooling. This means that parents meet with teachers on a regular basis, they can take part in parents’ evenings, and they can make or update the child’s personal learning plan once every semester.

Parents in their interviews were asked about communicating with the staff. Many parents felt that it is important that staff in the pre-primary school should take the initiative in discussions helping parents to have the courage to speak up and ask questions. This issue came up with several parents’ interviews.

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *“How is the pre-primary school? Have parents been encouraged to participate in the activities of the pre-primary school?”*

Interviewee: *“They encourage us a lot of the time, and they inform us well about everything and ask if they can take pictures of the children when they’re making a presentation or something.”* RIFL4

Quotations on Relative as exclusionary

Parents in the interviews were asked whether they actively co-operated with school, organisations and the administration. Parents often felt that their co-operation was not always particularly active. Parents had the feeling that they could not participate any more what they actually did. Paradoxically, parents also felt that they were encouraged to participate but active participation did not in fact take place for some reason or another.

Interview example:

Interviewer: *“But generally speaking, do parents participate in their little child’s activity, and in what way?”*

Interviewee: *“Quite little. They do not have much time, yeah, no time, so it goes. People take their child to pre-primary school at 7 and then at 4–5 bring them back home.”* RIFL1

Interview example:

“I have not participated in any educational sessions or any events. Also I do not remember any time that I would have been asked to participate or follow my child’s day here at the pre-primary school.” RIFL2

Quotations on Child as transformative

Children said that it is a good thing that parents participate in the day-care activities. There are not many children's responses related to topic co-operation with parents. Children spoke briefly, often using only a few words, the interviewer was not known to the children and the interview situation may well have been perceived as stressful to the child. The children in this study were 5–6 years old, thus their results should be treated carefully and strong conclusions should be avoided.

Interview example:

"My father and mother have been here quite a lot. It's a good thing." CIFL15

Quotations on Child as exclusionary

Children also when asked about parents' participation, replied mostly that parents are not participating in daycare. Interview situation has been exciting and the questions have been difficult to understand, some children had multicultural background also.

Interview example: (multicultural)

Interviewer: *"What about your parents? Do they participate in pre-primary school activities?"*

Interviewee: *"No, they haven't been here."* CIFL15

Interview example:

Interviewer: *"Have your parents been here when a programme for parents has been organised?"*

Interviewee: (Shakes head). CIML14

5.4 Discussion of the main findings

The aim of this research is to find out the most transformative and exclusionary practices concerning inclusion. For this reason this research combines both the qualitative research tradition, which seeks to understand, and the possibility of increasing credibility by using a method more close to quantitative, number-based analysis.

Table 9 presents quotation numbers from 8 conceptual categories selected for the results. The number of T and E quotations are also given.

Table 9. Quotation numbers from the results, divided by T and E

Agent	Total of quotations	T	E
Child	21	2	19
Relative	67	37	30
Teacher	60	49	11
Administration members	81	51	30
Organisation members	41	35	6
Group interview to professionals	30	25	5

A more profound analysis can be made by comparing T and E quotations between professionals (teachers, administration members, organisation members) and children/relatives.

There are 199 quotation numbers from the four most transformative conceptual categories, and 101 from the four most exclusionary conceptual categories. Thus, there are twice as many transformative as exclusionary quotations. However, on closer examination it can be seen that professionals gave **four times** more transformative quotations than parents/children. Parents/children gave about as many exclusionary quotations as professionals.

There were **160** transformative quotations from professionals and **39** from parents/children.

There were **52** exclusionary quotations from professionals and **49** from parents/children.

In addition, professionals often spoke more, so there was more transcribed material at the very beginning. However, the differences in opinions between professionals and others are significant and cannot be explained merely by the larger amount of transcribed material from professionals. The number of interviews was almost the same with 28 professionals and 26 parents and children. Group interviews, which were carried out in both 2008 and 2009 with professionals, are the reason why there are not as many parents/children interviews as professionals. This must be taken into account when making conclusions, but the fact that professionals gave four times more transformative quotations than parents/children needs to be considered.

When considering the results, I would conclude that there is a possibility of “professional pre-understanding”. This means that in dialogue, as understood by Habermas (1987) and Flecha (2000), opinions may be influenced when interviewees are representatives of professions and interview issues are related to their profession.

Similar phenomena have been discussed concerning people’s actions in groups, called Group polarisation (Rothwell, 1986), or risky shift. In such cases people’s opinions are stronger and they are willing to take more risks in a group than as alone individuals (Rothwell, 1986). Groups affect opinions, as implied in this study’s conclusion about professional pre-understanding. Professional pre-understanding plays a role whether we want it to or not, and society’s expectations about professions are something we all share. As Habermas (1987) says, the ideal speech situation is for every participant in a conversation to be free to challenge

what is said by any other speaker. Habermas also considers human behaviour; human beings must be able to organise themselves into social groups, and to do that they must be able to make sense of each other's actions and utterances (Edgar, 2006). So, it is part of human nature to categorise people. One way people are categorised is by profession, the expectation being that the individual should behave in a way expected from a representative of the profession in question. This expectation creates a pre-understanding related to a profession, which means that in the interview situation there is already a pre-understanding and people are always representatives of some group.

The reasons for pre-understanding can be society's expectations about a profession but also about the role of the interviewee. Parents are not 'employed' to act as parents, whereas the interviewed professionals (teachers, administrators and representatives of various professional organisations) are employed in their positions. A representative of a professional organisation is hired to operate for the advantage and goal of the organization, and in Finland there are usually no volunteers in these kinds of education-linked organisations. It is more likely to be the norm that people speak positively about their work and want to give a positive impression when interviewed as professionals.

As Hume says, there can only be knowledge through experience, which is also important to understand when studying inclusive practice (Bennett, 1971). Can all agents have the same experience, and how much experience is it reasonable to have to be able to make a conception? Also, people can easily adapt pre-understanding of professions, and by experience this can then prove to be correct or then it can change.

Education will play an increasing role as a societal setter of agenda, as Finland and many other European countries receive an increasing number of immigrants every year. In this study, I have not attempted to clarify the difference between a refugee and an immigrant.

Successful inclusionary practice shows in all municipal activities, nurseries, schools and leisure time. For the municipality, it is also good to have knowledge of effective inclusionary practices because there is always a question of how to use resources in the best way. I have been concerned about the short-sightedness of political decision-making, because exclusion in society in the long run is destructive both for the municipality and for the state. Since resources are limited, it is important to note how different groups feel that they have the opportunity to participate.

Different agents are highlighted in terms of theoretical background. No-one is alone in society but, all in all, everyone is affected and shaped by others. Economically, preventing exclusion is worthwhile in the long run. Therefore, already at an early stage, it is worthwhile to direct resources at practices that prevent exclusion.

One of the main tasks for communities, administration and representatives of organisations active in communities is specifically to reach parents and activate them. In other words, they must focus on informing parents about the range of services, assistance and support available in the region, including all actors like the church, libraries, health clinics and domestic help services.

Education generally suffers from a lack of resources, and this also emerged from this study. Still, as the OECD (2006a) states, education prevents further segregation, especially when resources are aimed at early childhood. Pre-primary education can prevent social and educational exclusion and sustain a student's long-term academic success. The early childhood period provides the best investment in human capital in relation to later opportunities in schooling at primary and secondary level. Learning in early childhood is very important. It improves further learning skills. Co-operation with peers and adults helps children to develop necessary basic life skills like autonomy, meaning-forming, creativity, problem solving and persistence (OECD, 2006a).

In the light of the research findings, **parents' opinions are not heard as much as they could be**. The most discouraging factor concerning inclusion is preconceptions. Preconceptions can be changed into positive thought experiences through participation. **Please note that without participation there can be no experience**. Experience is important. If there has previously been a negative experience, there should always be at least a second chance. People themselves create these barriers on the basis of their earlier experiences (Flecha, 2000).

Teachers are facing more and more challenges in today's schools. Teachers at pre-primary are well aware of inclusion and have adopted methods for successful inclusion for several years. They feel that inclusion is the only way forward in the future, and they share concerns about inadequate resources with the local administration. They also realise the importance of good communication, not only with parents but also with colleagues. As Blecker and Boakes (2010) state, inclusion is challenging for teachers. Teachers therefore require skills which are not only specific to their teaching disciplines, but also require communication skills and collaborative strategies that will enable them to work with colleagues.

To help inclusion, guidance from Dervin and Keihäs (2013) could be important; they argue that education should move towards the open encountering pedagogy. That is to say, for example, one anti-racism theme day per year is not enough. Encountering differences should be practised in groups and in different situations every day and in every subject. It is also important to practise communication and skills to read media critically (Derwin & Keihäs, 2013).

Teachers should take into account that the fundamental beliefs of students, learned and internalised from home, native culture or different social groups have a considerable impact on learning (Findley et al., 2001). Is this one of the reasons why parents and professionals exhibit such a big difference in transformative practice towards inclusion? When parents think that their culture is not supported by pre-primary school, this can make their attitude more negative. According to Tapola-Tuohikumpu (2005), it is recognised that parents have a need and desire to discuss all matters related to their child's welfare. One problem seems to be that the personnel do not have enough experts or other people with whom to talk and share matters (Tapola-Tuohikumpu, 2005).

Arguably the difference in understanding about support for minority groups between professionals and parents would decrease if professionals could reflect on their feelings related to families. Tapola-Tuohikumpu has pointed out that they found that professionals often feel that they do not have any means to operate and

respond to all family needs (Tapola-Tuohikumpu, 2005). This is contrary to this study's results, according to which professionals said that support was given to minority groups. Of course, it can be the case that support measures do exist, but the hectic pace of everyday work prevents them from being carried out.

In Norway, in a multicultural day care, videos have been made in many languages, and in these videos it is explained how different religions are taken into account. These videos are made for parents as well as for day-care professionals. There is also a project to help understanding between parents and professionals (Rhedding-Jones, 2010).

The VKK-Metro project considers parents' involvement in pre-primary schools. The project has interviewed parents and the participation of parents has been considered important, though many parents still say that it is difficult to obtain information from pre-primary school staff. Some parents also feel that it is difficult to obtain information by telephone (Venninen, Leinonen, Rautavaara-Hämäläinen & Purola, 2011).

In this research, it also became clear that there are challenges. Pre-primary school staff are working to their limits and probably cannot give as much information to parents as required. Family participation in school activities has been shown to be a significant source of motivation and meaning-creation for cultural groups, such as Romaní students (Gómez & Vargas, 2003).

Children are the future. We all know how important the first years in pre-school and school are. Such experiences affect a person's whole life. It is fundamental to know whether children know how their parents deal with inclusion, whether the parents are interested in daycare or school, and whether they see that there is a good future for their children.

The family acts as an agent between two worlds: society's expectations and the child's experience. A child cannot be expected to be more aware, so adults must take the responsibility (Flecha, 2009). We need to maintain the work and use inclusive methods, as Grieshaber and Miller (2010) have pointed out. Transformation takes place in classrooms every day, including having high expectations of all children, using the curriculum critically, using a pedagogy that engages children in meaningful ways, and using inclusionary strategies (Nieto & Bode, 2008).

Skutnabb-Kangas (2010) has written about the problems of language with multicultural children. There should also be teaching of a child's mother tongue, but still there are often problems. Parents also feel that even though they try to do everything that the dominant culture demands, their child still struggles at school. They may also fear that they are losing their child to the dominant culture. The important issue is for multicultural children not to be seen as deficient. We must understand that every human being has pre-understanding, which is usually shaped by language. Therefore, when people are not using their mother tongue, there is a greater risk of misunderstanding (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2010).

I would agree with Vygotsky (1978) that learning is most efficient when there are more capable peers in the same classroom. In this light, we must view special and multicultural education in a critical way. Multicultural children are easily in danger of being categorised as special education children. At least in Finland there are more multicultural children in special education than there should be according

to the share of the population occupied by multicultural children (Laaksonen, 2007).

Special education has historically been segregational, as it has in Finland, which means that students with learning or speaking difficulties are put together, and do not receive so-called normal education. Special education is a very sensitive issue, and every child's needs should be taken individually into account.

One of the best practices would be for special education classes to be offered within normal education, so pupils with difficulties, for example in reading and writing, could participate in small-group teaching conducted by special education teachers in those subjects, and then return to their normal classroom. This practice could be one or two semesters long or as long as needed. What is important is that when the child no longer experiences difficulties, he/she may revert to the normal curriculum. The progress of his/her development should be followed, and parents should also be informed at regular intervals.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Considerations about the methodology

The methodology of this study has adapted a critical communicative methodology mainly by using T and E dimensions. In addition, to understand critical communicative methodology, I took part in a training course arranged by authors who have developed that methodology.

I have followed the strategy that there must be a reason why certain issues arise. They may, for example, be weak signals that have been transmitted in an open-ended interview. The interviewee might not have knowledge about these matters but, when the material is analysed carefully, these matters have occurred more often than others. The aim of this study has been to use a method that makes it possible to exchange information reliably in an open-ended interview.

The number of quotations is important, for there must be a reason why some issues arose more than others. Importance can be attached to a sense of what is good or bad. The researcher selected T and E dimensions, according to critical communicative methodology (Gómez, Latorre, Sanchez & Flecha, 2006).

All interview methods are faced with the same challenge: is the researcher influencing the interviewee or not. In communicative interviews in particular this possibility existed, because the aim was to encourage dialogue and information exchange.

The method used in this study was qualitative, although, to increase validity, the researcher did include a number-based analysis. In qualitative research, a similar validity could have been reached if it had been possible to carry out similar qualitative studies. Often, however, it is impossible to conduct many studies in the same way so that they could be used as a reference. In this study, I have tried to find patterns according to the quotations, and those patterns are called conceptual categories. In the results, I have included direct quotations so that the reader can form an overall picture of the validity of the conceptual categories.

Content analysis is a method in which information is reduced. In this research, I have tried to form a general understanding by rereading the material several times. This general understanding is influenced by my own pre-understanding but, as Gadamer (2005) states, pure understanding is not possible.

In critical communicative methodology the ideal situation is a multicultural research team engaged in data collection; this, however, was not the case in this study. In my study, however, interview topics were modified by a multicultural advisory committee (arranged by the EU project Includ-Ed).

6.2 Data selection credibility

To make it possible to find the most transformative and exclusionary conceptual categories, the data must be summarised. This means that only conceptual categories with most quotations are selected for the final analysis. This also means that some conceptual categories are excluded, but this is also the case when number-based analysis is carried out, as the number itself will show the information (e.g. only the largest numbers are chosen).

The number of interviews was the same for the professionals and parents/children, but the focus group interview for the professionals increased the number of professional interviews by two. Interview forms were similar for all, although the children's interview form was shorter. Professionals spoke more, and therefore produced more quotations.

Further developing this transcribing level (e.g. to include pauses and other non verbal content or utterances) would have been a difficult task. As only one researcher analysed all the data the analysing process took a long time. However, if there had been more researchers this would have affected the results, and comparison between the agents would have been difficult for two main reasons. Firstly, it is inherent in qualitative research that the researcher brings into the analysis his or her own values. Secondly, when the aim is to be able to compare different agents, it is essential that the complete analysis is carried out by one researcher.

If analysing had included more details, the amount of data would have had to have been smaller, possibly 10–20 interviews. This research with 54 large interviews analysed by Atlas is quite unique. We must keep in mind the research questions, and then it is natural to focus on content level. This content level means that analysis focuses on sentences, normally one or two sentences, which express one issue.

When there was a large amount of data, predetermined selective categories were effective in reducing the material, and conceptual categorisation also helped to reduce the material even further. Figure 7 shows the structure of data selection.

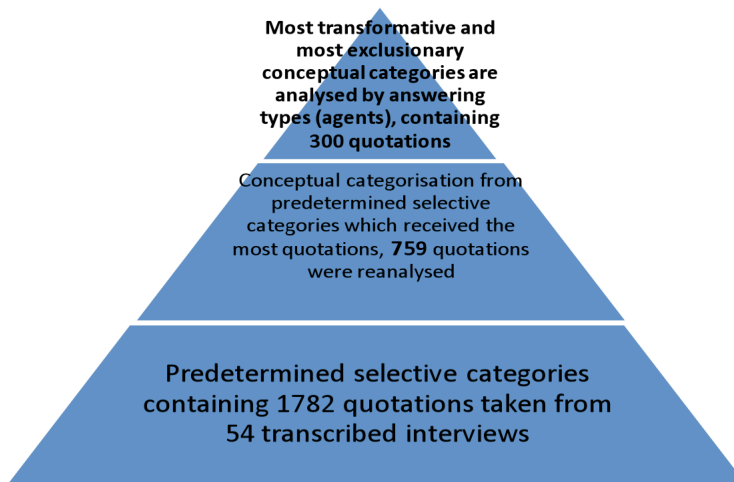


Figure 7. Structure of data selection

From the first step of the analysis, it would already have been possible to separate agents from predetermined selective categories. The reason why this was not done is that some predetermined selective categories received hundreds of quotations, for example 102, 105 or 354 (25–100 pages). These are too large to be analysed precisely. Quite a large range of quotations from predetermined selective categories (14 predetermined selective categories) was selected for conceptual category analysis.

These 14 predetermined selective categories included a total of 759 quotations, which would also be too large a number to be analysed precisely, so only 8 conceptual categories (including a total of about 300 quotations) were selected to be separated by agents for the final results. Conceptual category analysis served well the goal of summarising data more manageably.

When data is summarised by conceptual categorisation, some quotations from the final analysis are also excluded, but this can be done when using content analysis. In this study, the researcher used content-based qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

I wanted to find clusters from the quotations, and also present the quotations behind the clusters. Predetermined selective categories were the first ready-made clusters, and from those, new clusters were formulated by conceptual categories. Also, if more conceptual categories would have been selected for the results they would most likely have given more children's quotations. The reason why I took only eight categories (the four most transformative and the four most exclusionary), was the amount of data; eight conceptual categories already included 300 quotations (the round number is a matter of chance).

I also followed the instruction “you know what you display”. Therefore, it was possible to present eight conceptual categories in a figure (see Figure 6 in Chapter 5), so that it is easily understood. More conceptual categories presented in one figure and including all the information now presented in Figure 6 would have been difficult.

It is possible that different results might have occurred if the analysis had concentrated on a few interviews only. The transcribing level could have been more detailed, including pauses, sighs and other sounds made by the interviewees.

Predetermined selective categories for 2009 were not as suitable for this study as the predetermined selective categories for 2008, as 2009 had, for example, predetermined selective categories for academic issues, which was not particularly relevant for pre-primary school education in Finland. In the EU project Includ-Ed, Finland was responsible for pre-primary school education, which is also the data for this study, and the other partners were responsible for other schooling levels like primary, upper secondary and vocational school. The researcher decided to keep the data from 2009 and concluded that information from that year does not harm the data from 2008, but will increase the number of quotations and therefore increase the credibility of the results.

6.3 Data analysis credibility

Qualitative methodology has an inaccurate side, as Robson says: “It is a difficult method to follow, both procedurally and because of the tensions between being closely embedded in the context and process of explanations and the research need to be honest and balanced” (Robson, 2002, p.198). He also presents a solution to how this inaccuracy can be prevented: “As with other qualitative approaches, this dilemma can be addressed by providing **detailed accounts** of the research process so that it is possible to guard against suspicions of basing the interpretation on a selective and biased reading” (Robson, 2002, p.198).

In this research, **detailed accounts** were obtained using computer-based analysis (ATLAS.ti 5.0). This makes it possible to analyse almost all the data, meaning that every sentence is analysed. All this means that the information is summarised so that only the most important (most often mentioned) aspects are highlighted. The analysis takes the form of a family tree, so from the top of a large number of variables, the information is analysed down to only a few main aspects.

I have tried throughout to be objective, but sometimes I have had to make choices. In the analysis stage, results should not be overgeneralised, and the fact that different people see results in different ways should be taken into consideration. It is good practice to ask why something is done in the way it is (Carspecken & Apple, 1992).

In this research, generalisations were formed on the basis of quotation selection. But when trying to be objective, the material was read through several times and, in each phase of the analysis, the material was summarised and so it could be read through even more carefully again.

6.4 The researcher’s credibility

The greatest risk to credibility is, of course, the researcher himself. I have 17 years’ experience of working as a special education teacher. I have also worked four years as a project designer for the EU project Includ-Ed at the University of Helsinki.

Before that I took part in another EU project called TIMSIS, which also lasted four years. The TIMSIS project developed teaching material concerning pupils with serious and chronic illness in both regular and hospital attached schools (TIMSIS, 2010), and in this project I was a representative of the City of Helsinki, which was in co-operation with the University of Helsinki.

I studied the subject earlier in my pre-Master's thesis in 1992, which dealt with culture shock, and then in a Master's thesis (Niemelä, 1995) dealing with immigrant students in Helsinki (published by the City of Helsinki). I also wrote a second Master's thesis in the field of special education, which considered the subject of children's speech development disorders.

I carried out a total of 60 open-ended interviews on a similar topic in 2008–2010, and altogether conducted about 100 open-ended interviews. In earlier studies, I also used quantitative methods but, because of difficulties in filling in the questionnaire and the risk of misunderstanding, I favoured open-ended interviews in this study.

Freire (1970) emphasises good knowledge about the interviewees' lives, and I obtained information on multicultural issues in Finland. I have some experience of preschool and early childhood education. I taught pre-primary school and primary school children in a hospital school (children with cancer) for seven years.

Hume (Mossner, 1969) says that experience is the source of all information. I also feel that the teacher should as much as possible know about and have experience of foreign cultures. In my own case I spent two years on a sailing boat sailing around the world and visiting schools wherever possible.

In reviewing my own work I noticed the following points. The theoretical part is the first element of uncertainty and concerns how previous research has been carried out and implemented. The scientific community should work as a filter, but it is impossible for any one individual to check everything. Moreover, however a researcher views previous studies, there will always be the possibility of misunderstanding, though there might not be an opportunity to discuss questions which previous research raises.

Another factor of uncertainty is the interview part. Has the researcher put questions to the interviewee so that he/she understands them correctly? How are the questions actually understood? What conclusions has the researcher drawn before the interview situation? What is the researcher's pre-understanding? Are the questions relevant to finding out about inclusion practices?

Hume (Bennett, 1971) also has thoughts on preconceptions. He asks how do we know whether the concept or preconceptions that we use are simply the result of habit rather than actually making sense? If the immediate impressions based on experience have not occurred, the concept or preconceptions are without content. Hume means that we often take things for granted, pointing out that only through experience can we say something. In fact, we must take into account many factors concerning inaccuracy, beginning with the question whether our senses are accurate when repeating reality (Bennett, 1971).

I collected and read the literature and organised the theory, keeping in mind the research questions. The researcher's opinion sets up a polarity between the classifier and the classified and signifies a power: "someone thinks this is good, and it

can only be good if someone else's culture is bad" (LeCompte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992). Also in this study, it was sometimes difficult to make T and E selection, and one can be made only with the help of the other.

I am aware that pre-understanding or pre-conception easily modifies subjects, and there is a danger that questions are put in a way that follows the researcher's own pre-understanding. Also in the analysis process, a considered attempt was made to be neutral and to make generalisations that are only based on the data.

Generally about carrying out this research

In the research process, the anonymity of the interviewees has been ensured, and close co-operating took place with the research pre-primary school in order not to cause any extra work to the educational staff. Also, when interviewing professionals, the researcher has been as flexible as possible. The interview process is somewhat inconvenient to the interviewees' lives, so explanations were given that the aim of the study was to gain knowledge that could be used to increase inclusion and to help in everyday life.

The repeatability of qualitative research is always a problem. In my opinion the repeatability of this study is exceptionally good because of the large amount of data. If the same number of interviews had been conducted with the same group of people of similar socio-economic background, and if the data were analysed in the same way, it is my belief that the results would be similar.

This research has taught the researcher a great deal, and the process has shown that there can be no exact information. As Alasuutari (1989, p.123) has said: "it is worth remembering that there has never been certain knowledge, it may only be our best guess".

6.5 Recommendation for inclusive practice

Development proposals

Generally speaking, inclusion means that there is no difference between individual persons, i.e. all persons are equal. In this research, the theme is to follow inclusion from the perspective of education and teaching. However, the community is involved in education. It is generally considered that one of the most modifying factors for the community is education. In education, inclusion means that everyone has or everyone will get the same chance to learn and develop.

It is my opinion that this issue should be studied further, because the contradiction between responses is so great. It should be essential to find out why parents cannot participate. It must be remembered that half the parents of the interviewees had an immigrant background (an interpreter was used when needed), and the research area had a low socio-economic status. Some parents may therefore face problems with working life, substance abuse and language skills. Difficulties in these areas generally exclude people from the community.

One issue to be noted here is **that teachers say that support for minority groups is available, but either parents do not bring up the matter** in interviews

or there is no support. To questions which dealt with the support available for minority groups (immigrants, special students), teachers responded that support is readily available. Parents do not bring the matter up; support for minority groups is not raised in their interviews. Thus, it can be concluded that either there is no support or parents do not want to talk about it. If support is to be readily available, it would be expected that this should be mentioned at some point in the interview, but this was not the case.

The importance of cooperation is crucial among all the parties. Direct interaction is important, for example, between parents and staff. The results showed that the professionals and parents have a different understanding about support for minority groups. Information for minority groups should be more widely available.

There should be more efforts to increase parents' participation and to make parents feel that their participation is important and has an effect.

Family participation motivates students but, according to the research findings, parents are quite careful about participation. Parents are important agents in the community in terms of enabling transformation. In Finland, parental involvement is not very popular, parents trust the professionals, but they have the feeling that there is not that much co-operation with the pre-primary school. Professionals have also said that they have worked hard to make co-operation with parents work.

In the interviews, one area under discussion was the participation of parents in school work. This question can be understood as whether parents attend their children's classes to help the teacher, and in some EU countries this happens. But in Finland, parents are not involved in lessons, although by Finnish law education is open to all. According to Finnish law, helpers must at least be qualified as a school assistant to be able to participate in a teaching event and to support the teacher. In Finland parents are involved in decisions concerning their child. Also, parents have the opportunity to participate in the school board and attend parents' evenings organised at least once a year.

Research proposals

Inclusion should be studied further, but as this study shows, agents have different opinion about inclusive practices. With regard to inclusion, professionals give a more positive picture than parents. This is natural and must be taken into account when conducting research, as quite possibly some other data collection technique can give different answers. In this research, a questionnaire for professionals could have given different information, and would have been more anonymous. Face-to-face interviews can be challenging, and when the interviewee represents a profession, he/she will speak under that profession's pre-understanding. This can mean that negative issues are not easily brought up.

Such research is still needed, especially focusing on the voices of children. As the children's interviews were shorter, they do not, of course, have that many quotations. Additionally, more research should be done on multicultural classes and on the effect of language development on native and multicultural children.

Inclusive future and transformation

It is, of course, only natural for parents to want to provide the best for their children and, if they have the chance, they will also choose what is in their opinion the best school. Society must be aware of this, and parents should not be blamed. In immigration, the biggest driving force is the individual's need to improve his/her living conditions, as Kontula (2010) says in her work on immigrant workers. It is a human need, and perhaps one of man's evolutionary forces for survival.

In Finnish society, inclusion faces challenges. Pre-primary school is an important stage on the way to inclusion, both for parents and children. Results have shown that there is still a lot to do, and professionals can take parents' points of view better into account.

According to the results of this research, the need for transformation is there, although the research area was among the most heterogeneous in Finland. All the signs suggest that in Finland immigration will increase in the years to come. Transformation is happening every day at pre-primary and primary schools and in the local neighbourhoods.

We can be a part of the transformation, or then we can choose segregation, which will work against inclusion and lead to further prejudices. Technology means that the world will increasingly resemble the global village, and thus transformation towards inclusion will increase.

Based on the data analysis, a few things can be said about inclusion in the future. The most mentioned transformative quotations from all the analysis steps concerned co-operation, and this must be seen as an important issue in supporting inclusion.

Even though I have not made comparisons between immigrant parents and Finnish parents, it is interesting to realise how some minority group parents have reported that good co-operation increases their self confidence. Some multicultural parents also say that they can speak about everything at pre-primary school. These statements are encouraging examples that inclusion is taking place. As mentioned earlier, co-operation is the most important transformative practice, and good co-operation involves knowledge of and respect for different cultures.

In the final stage of the analysis, it can be seen that professionals gave four times more transformative quotations than parents and children, so a conclusion about professionals' pre-understanding should be carefully drawn. More research should be carried out where the main focus is on parents and children. Also, for professionals, it is encouraging to know that many things are already on right track to successful inclusion.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

(Interview forms 2008 and 2009)

Appendix 2

(Projects at the research pre-primary school)

Appendix 3

(Predetermined selective categories 2008 and 2009)

APPENDIX 1

2008 Communicative open-ended interview: pupils

To be carried out with 6 pre-primary pupils.

Objective of the interview: Through a cooperative process between two people a consensual interpretation of reality is aimed for. Reflections are made of the interpretations which the pupil makes of his or her life, as well as what it means to him or her to participate in the local educational project which is being analysed.

In this script, everything in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the hypotheses derived from the 1st round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, and can be asked in joint reflection with the family member if it is considered to be necessary and if there is an opportunity to extend the interview.

A. Participation in the pupil's learning activities

This area involves studying the participation of family members in learning activities more in depth, as well as the importance of this participation for the pupils and the benefits which it entails with regard to the academic results of the pupils, to school coexistence, to the pupil's environment and the environment in the neighbourhood. Attention should be paid to the importance of this participation with regard to learning and the expectations of the pupils.

1. **Apart from the teachers, who else participates in school activities? What type of people participate?** (Take other learning spaces into account, as well as the inclusion of IT, and extracurricular activities.)
2. **How do you organise yourselves in the classroom or in other spaces which other people participate in?** (*For example, how do you feel? How do you organise groups? The child should explain whether the groups are heterogeneous or homogeneous. Ask if the opportunity is taken to remove children from the classroom based on their level or their learning rhythms etc.*) **What happens when there are other people in the classroom?** (*Or in the library, in IT classrooms, etc. Emphasise this*

area. *How do they help you to learn more? Do you behave better with your classmates when they are there? Do you think that the fact that family members and other people from the community participate in the classrooms and in the school makes learning better? Study the benefits which the participation of the community has entailed for classrooms in more depth. Especially look at what type of people participate? What are the characteristics of these people? Are they family members, or volunteers etc?)*

Optional question in order to obtain more information about the previous answers and to study the issues which should have come up in more depth.

(For example since your Mum or Dad or another person from your family has been coming here to learn:

- *Have you improved in any subject?*
- *How do you behave in class or in the playground?*
- *Are you more enthusiastic about studying?*
- *How do you get on with that family member?*

B. Family and community education

The aim is to go into more depth concerning the relationship between family education and the satisfaction with the learning process which the child participating in the interview feels, as well as any improvements the child feels have occurred. Through reflection and the interpretations of the child it will be possible to go deeper into the repercussions which this type of participation may have, especially with regard to the academic results of the pupils, to school coexistence, to an increase in participation and to vulnerable groups,¹ in the pupil's environment and that of the community in general. The questions should be formed in such a way that the child can elaborate when answering, helping him or her to reflect on the benefits which this participation has.

- 3. Does anyone from your family or from one of your classmate's family come to the school to learn / participate in school life / activities? In what way/s?** *(For example to do a course, to learn Catalan, to do IT classes, or any other type of activity?) What do they learn in these classes / do in these activities?* *(Obtain information about the type of education they receive and whether the family member decided on this alone).* **How did the person sign up for the course / activities?** *(Obtain information if the child knows the way in which the person began to participate.)*

- 4. What do you think has improved at school** *(or in your house, if it is one of your own family members who come to the school to learn)* **since family members started coming to the school to learn / participate more at school?**

For example, since your Mum or Dad or another person from your family (or a member of another child's family) has been coming to the school to learn

- *Have you or has the other child improved in any subject?*
- *How do you or how does the other child behave in the classroom or in the playground?*
- *Has the enthusiasm you have for studying changed?*
- *How do you get on with this family member?*

¹ Cultural minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, women, young people.

(We will try to relate the participation of the family member to the benefits which the child perceives with regard to: academic results, coexistence, an increase in participation, in the environment, etc. Potential improvements the family member has experienced in relation to work, housing or studying etc. will also be looked for here.)

Optional question to add information to the previous answer

- *Apart from your family member, have any of their friends also signed up to take the course?*

5. **How do you think that these programmes/activities have helped to include children and families of different culture/religion/with special needs? (Ask respondent to give you a specific example.)**

C. Participation in school decision making processes and accountability processes

The aim here is to study the participation of the community in decision-making and accountability processes in the school in more depth. In order to do this, the children will be asked about the participation of their family members and the community in these processes. Attention will be paid to the benefits which this participation entails with regard to pupils' academic results, to school coexistence, to increase in participation, and to vulnerable groups, in the pupil's environment and that of the community in general.

It will be important to record the reflections and interpretations of the students in relation to the way in which they experience the above-mentioned benefits.

6. **Who makes the decisions in the school? Is it teachers, family members, the children, other people? How are these decisions made? (Ask if they have meetings, if the students attend these meetings, or if they know which family members or people from the community attend these meetings.) Are your parents/guardians involved in these decisions? Are you as students consulted and involved? If so, in what way/s?**
7. **If family members and other people from the community made decisions related to the school along with the teachers, how has this improved the school? (For example, if school hours have to be decided on, is it better that teachers make the decisions alone or that parents can decide too? Obtain information about whether the pupil's academic results or coexistence have improved or could improve, whether participation has increased, or if there have been changes in the environment, etc.?)**
8. **Do you know if the teachers talk about the activities the school carries out and whether they work or not with family members and other people in the neighbourhood? Do they describe these activities to you? (For example, if a decision is made to organise a school trip to Telepizza or to a Museum, do the teachers explain why this is happening and why the pupils and the school are going there?)**

D. The participation of the community in the Curriculum and in evaluation.

Section D: Optional section since the following questions may be too difficult for primary school pupils but relevant to secondary school students.

This section involves reflecting along with pupils on the importance and the benefits which the participation of their family members and the community provide with regard to defining the curriculum and evaluation.

9. **Do you know if family members and other people from the community make decisions related to what is done in the classroom? Who decides on what you have to learn and what you do not have to learn?** *(For example, if the teacher thinks that a student should change groups in a maths class, is it better for them to decide alone, or should a family member also be able to decide?)*

10. **What do you think about the idea that family members and other people from the community would be able to make decisions about the classes and about evaluation? Do you think that it would be better for the school and for you, the pupils? Why?** *(Reflect on whether it would be positive or not and about why it would be better for family members to participate in these areas, would it help you to improve? Benefits related to an improvement in results, coexistence, the environment, an increase in participation etc.)*

11. **Do they understand your family's customs in the school?** *(Change the question according to the culture of the child being interviewed. Ask for specific examples of the culture of the child in order to find out whether he or she feels that his or her culture is represented in the school.)*

Optional question to find out about the inclusion of democratic practices in the school

How do you and you classmates help each other? (Promoting solidarity amongst classmates, working together, respect etc?)

E. Other forms of participation

12. **What would you like your family members or other people in the neighbourhood to do in the school? Why?**

F. Gender dimension

Other women

13. **Apart from the female teachers, are there any other women who participate in the school? Are they members of your family or of your classmate's families? Are they from "here" or from other countries? Do you like them to come to the school? Does it help you to learn more? Does it help you to find out more about other countries?**

2008 Communicative open-ended Interview: organisation representative

To be carried out with 5 community organisation representatives who are involved in the school.

Objective of the interview: To collect and analyse the information provided by representatives of other community organisations involved in the local project to help identify the way in which the involvement of the community contributes to an improvement in success at school, in coexistence and in ensuring the success of the said involvement.

In this script, everything that appears in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the hypotheses derived from the 1st round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, and can be asked in joint reflection with teachers if it is considered to be necessary and if there is an opportunity to extend the interview.

A. Family and community education

1. **Are there any forms of family education in your school? If so, who participates?** (*Is there any group of people that participate more than others? Who from the community participate most?*)
What does it consist of? What type of activities does it involve? (*Obtain information about the types of family education carried out in the school.*) **And how is it organised?** (*Who decides on the material? On what basis is the schedule planned? Ask if the organisation which the person is involved in collaborates in the organisation of any of the programmes.*)
2. **Why do you think people participate in family education?** (*in relation to different strategies [for example dialogic and democratic] used at the school in order to obtain higher participation rates*)
Does the school take into account the families' needs? Describe. In what way do you think that relatives' participation helps children's education?
3. **Since the family education courses began, have you observed any type of improvement in the school?** (*Especially in the academic performance of the pupils (in some subjects more than in others), in coexistence in the school, in the environment. Ask for possible improvement regarding work, living conditions, education, etc.*)

Optional question to clarify the two previous answers:

- *Since family education courses began, have you observed any type of improvement in the **academic results** of the students and **school coexistence**? What type of improvement? (Better results in some subjects, more interest, fewer disagreements, less insults, more respect for different cultures, etc.)*
- *How are vulnerable groups (ethnic groups, people with disabilities, etc.) affected by family and community education with regard to academic achievements and the school environment?*
- *Have you observed any changes in the environment?*

B. Participation in school decision-making processes and accountability processes

4. **Which areas of the management and the organisation of the school can the community participate in? Who participates?** (*Ask if the organisation the person is involved in takes part in these activities and in what way.*) (*Obtain information whether persons from ethnic and/or cultural minorities participate. If this is so, ask if they gain any specific benefits from their participation.*) **What benefits do you think this participation brings?** (*Obtain information about whether academic results and peer relations have improved, if the school environment has changed, etc. If the interviewee does not know or does not have this information, ask whether he/she believes it would change under those circumstances.*)

5. **How is community participation in decision-making processes organised?** (*Ask about strategies [for example dialogic and democratic] used at the school in order to increase participation rates: whether everyone is asked their opinion, whether a consensus is reached, validity of arguments regardless of status, etc.*) **Does the fact that it is organised in such a way affect participation success?** (*Does it increase, or not promote participation, etc.? Ask how could it be organised to improve and promote participation. Refer both to the participation of people in general as well as that of organisations in the community which the interviewee is involved in.*)

Optional question to include the dissemination activities carried out in the school.

- Does this type of participation contribute to the dissemination of what is being done in the school? Has it changed the image of the school?
6. **Does the school describe and justify the decisions it makes and the actions it carries out in the school to the community? Are organisations like yours able to express their opinion on this?** (*For example, if the school divides pupils into groups according to their abilities (streaming), or creates heterogeneous groups, for example, does it explain why it does so and what the results of these practices are? Provide an example based on what is being done in the school.*)

 7. **In what ways does the school communicate/collaborate with organisations in the community** (*Ask the interviewee about a specific example of how his or her organisation collaborates with the school.*) ?

 8. **How do you think that these programmes/activities have helped to include children and families of different cultures/religions/ with special needs?** (*Ask the respondent to give you a specific example.*)

C. Community participation in the curriculum and in evaluation

9. **Does the community participate in the development of the curriculum in the school? Who participates?** (*Ask if the interviewee's organisation participates, not only in relation to the official curriculum, but also to adaptations of it, the organisation of material in the classroom, learning support, etc.*) **And who participates in student evaluation?**

If the answer is yes: *How is the participation of these people organised and developed?*

If the answer is no: *Do you think that there should be participation in these areas?*

- 10. How has community participation changed over the past few years in frequency and in level of involvement? How are these changes related to the children's educational needs/problems?**
- 11. What benefits does/could community participation in the curriculum and in evaluation provide?** *(In relation to improvements in academic performance, coexistence, transformation of community environment, etc.) Are there any family or community members belonging to minorities (vulnerable groups) who participate? What other benefits can they obtain from their participation?*
- 12. Is this related to more inclusive practices? What type of practices?** *(For example, when there is community participation in the development of the curriculum, is the curriculum adapted, are the classes divided into groups based on their learning level etc. Ask about what decisions are being made and how, especially with regard to vulnerable groups.)*
- 13. How does the curriculum reflect the diversity which exists in the school?** *(Cultural minorities, people with disabilities, gender differences.) How is it ensured that the school reflects this diversity?*

Optional question in order to investigate the inclusion of democratic values in the school

- *On a daily basis, how are democratic values included into the curriculum, in what type of activities (promoting solidarity between classmates, teamwork, respect, etc.)?*

D. Participation in learning activities

- 14. In what type of learning activities do community members participate? Who participate and how?** *(Especially, what types of people participate? Is there any characteristic that stands out? Are they family members, volunteers etc.? Investigate what type of people participate, whether they belong to minorities, how do they participate, in what activities? Have in mind the inclusion of ICT and after school activities.)*
- 15. How are the activities inside the classroom organised if, for example, a community member participates?** *(For example, when is community participation taken into account? Are the classes organised into heterogeneous and homogeneous groups? Is there an opportunity to take the children out of the classroom based on their educational levels or learning rhythms? Investigate the benefits of community participation in the classroom in depth. Especially, focus on who participates and the characteristics of these people? Are they family members, volunteers, etc.?)*

- 16. Why do you think community members participate in such activities? What is the school (teachers, organisation, etc.) doing to increase community participation?** (If necessary, personalise the question.)
- 17. What benefits from the community participation are there/ would there be in these activities?** (Investigate the benefits that were obtained from community participation in the classroom, in school performance, in improvement in school coexistence, in opportunities for those who participate, etc. Especially, what types of person participate? Are there any common characteristics? Are there family members, volunteers, etc?) **What specific benefits can there be from the participation of immigrants or persons belonging to ethnic minorities?**

Optional question, to be asked in order to clarify the previous answers and issues which should have come out earlier during the interview.

- *Was any social advancement for any of the previous participants observed (in terms of jobs, education, social participation, etc.)*
- *Have there been any changes in the environment based on this participation? What type of changes? (In the pupil's life, in neighbourhood relations, etc.)*

E. Other forms of participation

- 18. In what way do organisations in the community become involved? Should they become involved in the school? What do you think their role should be?**
- 19. Apart from the areas in which the community is already participating, where else could they participate in? What benefits would that bring?** (*in relation to academic results, coexistence, increased participation, the school environment, etc.*) *For example, if the organisations in the community organise activities or participate in any other way.*

F. Gender dimension

(If this aspect did not come up during the interview, a question about community participation and combating gender stereotypes can be included here.)

- 20. Do you think that community participation, especially that of women (Arab women, immigrant women, Roma mothers or grandmothers) contributes towards overcoming gender stereotypes?** (*Provide examples if possible.*)

Other women

- 21. What do women who have traditionally not participated, for example those with no education, participate in?** (Issues we have commented on previously: family education, participation in the decision-making process, in the curriculum, in evaluation and in learning activities). **What types of improvement can be observed?**

2008 Communicative open-ended interview: families

To be carried out with 7 family members of primary school pupils.

Objective of the interview: Through a cooperative process between two people a consensus interpretation of reality is sought. The objective is to reflect on the interpretations of the family member and the significance of his or her participation in the school.

In this script, everything in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the hypotheses derived from the 1st round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, and can be asked in joint reflection with the family member if it is considered to be necessary and if there is an opportunity to extend the interview.

A. Family and community education

The objective is to investigate, through the reflections and interpretations of the family members, how family education is organised and how it is developed (whether he or she participates or does not). On the other hand, it is important to examine the repercussions of this type of participation on the academic performance of the pupils, on school coexistence, on improving the lives of those who participate, and on the school and the community environment. Questions about the participation of people from vulnerable groups,² and about school strategies that lead to successful participation should be asked.

1. **Is there any type of family education carried out in the school? Who participates in this? / Does the school involve you as parents?** (You should not only ask whether that person participates but also whether immigrants, cultural minorities etc. participate as well. Ask whether there is a group of people which participates more than others.) **Can you explain what form this participation takes? / In what ways do you participate and how it is organised?** (Obtain information about the type of family education organised in the school, who decides on the material, who teaches it, and how the schedule is planned, etc.)
2. **Why do you think people participate in family education?** (Link this to the different strategies [either dialogic or democratic for example] which are used in the school in order to increase participation. Ask whether community participation has increased due to these strategies). **In what ways does the school take the needs of families into account?**

If the interviewee participates in family education, then he or she should reflect on the improvements either he or she or the children in the school have experienced. If the interviewee does not participate in this type of education, the reflection should focus on the potential benefits it could provide.

3. **Since the beginning of your participation in family education programmes, in what way has it helped you in your life and in the school? Do you think it has helped the children too? If yes, in what way/s?** (In relation to the academic results of your child/children/family members, to coexistence, and to the school environment. Ask about possible improvements in relation to work, living conditions, education, etc.)

² Cultural minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, women, young people.

Optional questions, to be asked in order to clarify the two previous questions:

- Do you think there has been an improvement in the **academic results** and the **coexistence of the students** since the family education programmes began? What types of improvement have you observed? (Improvement in academic results in some areas, more interest in studying etc.)
 - *How does the participation of community members from **vulnerable groups** (ethnic groups, people with disabilities, etc.) influence the improvement of academic results and of school coexistence?*
 - *Do you think there have been any **changes in other social environments outside the school**, for example, at home, etc.?*
4. **How do you think that these programmes/activities have helped to include children and families of different cultures/religions/with special needs? (Ask the respondent to give you a specific example.)**

B. Participation in school decision-making processes and accountability processes

The objective is to obtain information about community participation in the decision-making process and accountability process. In this section family members should be asked about their participation in these processes, and about the way in which this participation is organised and carried out. Pay attention to the benefits which this participation provides in relation to pupil's academic results, to school coexistence, to an increase in participation, to vulnerable groups, and to the school and community environment.

5. **Do families and the community participate in the decision-making process concerning the organisation of the school? In your opinion, what benefits do you think this participation provides/could provide?** (Obtain information about whether there has been any improvement or would there be any improvement in the academic performance of pupils, and in coexistence, if participation increased, or whether there have already been some changes in the school environment, etc.) (If the interviewee does not know or does not have this information, ask whether he or she thinks there would potentially be any improvement.)
6. **What does the school do in order to include families in the decision-making process? How is this organised?** (Ask about the strategies [either dialogic or democratic] used by the school: does it ask everyone for their opinion, does it reach decisions based on a consensus, does it value arguments regardless of people's status etc.)? **Does the fact that the decision-making process is organised in such a way affect participation?** (Does this lead to an increase in participation, create greater interest in participation, or does it not promote participation, etc? If the organisation of the decision-making process does not have a dialogic orientation, ask how could it be orientated in order to improve and promote participation?)

Additional questions, to be asked in order to find out about the dissemination of what is being done in the school

Does this type of participation contribute to promoting what is being done in the school? Has the image of the school changed?

7. **Do you think that the school describes and justifies the decisions made and the implementation of their actions to families and to the communities?** (For example, if the school divides pupils into groups based on the children's abilities in some areas [streaming], does it explain why it does so and what the academic results it obtains are. Or if, for example, heterogeneous groups are formed, etc, is this also explained? Provide examples of what the school does.)

C. Community participation in the curriculum and in evaluation

In this section, the objective is to obtain information about the participation of families and the community in the creation of the curriculum and in the evaluation of pupils, how this is organised and what benefits this participation provides. If this type of participation does not exist, ask about how important they think family participation is and the potential benefits they believe such participation could provide.

8. **Are you able to participate in making decisions related to the activities which are carried out in class, or to what the children have to learn?** (This question does not only refer to the official curriculum, but also to curricular adaptations, the organisation of material in the classroom, learning support, etc. Inquire whether they can decide on what is being done in class, whether the ICA is used or not, repetition, etc.) **And who participates in the evaluation of the school/pupils?**

If the answer is yes: How is your participation organised and carried out?

If the answer is no: Do you think that your participation should be included in these areas?

9. **What benefits does/could participation in the curriculum and evaluation provide?** (With regard to better academic results, coexistence, the environment, an increase in participation, etc.) **Are there any people who are members of minorities or are immigrants (vulnerable groups) who participate? What other benefits can there be? If family members or people from the community who belong to minorities (vulnerable groups) participate, what other benefits could this provide?**
10. **Do you think that the school curriculum reflects the diversity in your community?** (Ask whether cultural minorities, people with disabilities, women, etc. feel that they are being represented) **How is it ensured that the school represents this diversity?**

Additional questions, to help examine the inclusion of democratic values in the school

- a. *Do you think that the school incorporates democratic values, if so in what type of activities, or daily practices (promoting solidarity among pupils, working in groups, respect, etc.)?*

D. Participation in learning activities

This section involves studying the participation of family members in learning activities, above all in relation to participation in classrooms, the importance of this participation of family members and the benefits which this entails in relation to the pupil's academic results, school coexistence, in an increase in participation, in relation to vulnerable groups, in the pupil's environment and that of the neighbourhood in general. Attention should be paid to the expectations the person has of their own opportunities to participate.

11. **Which of the pupil's learning activities do people from the community participate in? Who participates and how do they participate?** (*Especially, what characteristics do the people who par-*

participate have? Are they family members, volunteers, etc? Look at what type of people participate [if they are from cultural minorities or not and what type of participation they are involved in]. What activities do they participate in? Take the inclusion of ICT and extracurricular activities into account.)

12. **How are classroom activities organised when members of the community participate?** *(For example, when the community participates, is the class organised into homogeneous or heterogeneous groups? Is the opportunity taken to remove children from the classroom based on their level or their learning rhythms, etc?)*
13. **Why do you think that people from the community participate in these types of activities? What does the school do in order to ensure that these people participate in the activities?** *(If this particular person participates in the school, ask the question on a personal level.)*
14. **What are the benefits of the participation of people from the community in these activities?** *(Look in detail at the benefits which the participation of the community has brought to the classrooms. Especially ask about who participates and what the characteristics of these people are? Family members, volunteers, etc.)*

Optional questions in order to obtain more information about the previous answers on the issues which should have come up:

- Have there been any improvements in your life or in the life of anyone else who has participated (either work related, or related to education or social participation, etc.)
- *Has any transformation in the environment occurred due to this participation? What type of transformation? (In the student's lives, in neighbourhood relations, in neighbourhood perceptions, etc.).*
- *Has it lead to an increase in participation?*

E. Other forms of participation

15. **Apart from the forms of participation we have already mentioned, in what other areas could family members and members of the community participate? What benefits would this have?** *(In relation to academic results, coexistence, more participation, and the environment, etc amongst others.)*

F. Gender dimension

16. **Does the participation of family members and the community, especially of particular women (Arab women, immigrant women, or Roma mothers and grandmothers), contribute towards overcoming gender stereotypes?** *(Provide an example if possible.)*

Other women

If the interviewee is a woman who has traditionally been excluded, personalise this question.

- 17. What do women who have traditionally not participated, such as for example women with no academic qualifications, participate in? /What do you participate in? (*Issues which we have discussed previously: family education, decision-making processes, participation in the curriculum, in evaluation and in the pupil's learning activities.*) What are the improvements which occur due to this participation?**

2008 Communicative open-ended interviews: administration representatives

To be carried out with 5 administration representatives who work in different areas of society.

Objective of the interview: To collect and analyse the information provided by people in local government in order to identify the position taken by the public administration about how the involvement of the community and organisations contributes towards improving success at school, coexistence and ensuring the success of the said involvement.

In this script, everything in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview, and which correspond to the indicators provided in Annex I and which add empirical evidence to the results of Report 2 (Project 1).

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, and are meant to be asked in joint reflection with the interviewee, if it is considered to be necessary and if there is an opportunity to extend the interview.

A. Family and community education

1. Do you know if they carry out family education programmes in the school?

(Do you know who participates in these programmes? Ask if immigrants or people from cultural minorities, etc participate. Ask if there is a group which participates more than others). (Do you know what it involves and how they organise it? Obtain information about the type of classes which are taught and about who decides on the subjects, who teaches the classes, and how the timetable is decided on, etc.)

2. What type of improvements do you think this education could lead to? *(In relation to the academic results of the school or family members, coexistence, the environment, specific improvements for vulnerable groups.)* **Do you think that this type of participation is related to potential improvements in other areas of society (such as, for example, where you work)?** *(Ask about potential improvements in the life of the participants, work, life conditions, education, etc).*

3. **Do you think that the local government which you work for could contribute in some way to carrying out family education? In what way?** *(If the interviewee is already doing so ask for an example.)*

B. Participation in the school decision-making processes and accountability processes

4. **Do you know whether people from the community or from the local government itself where you work participate in the management and organisation activities in the school? Who participates?** *(Obtain information about whether ethnic minorities participate. If they do, ask about the specific benefits of their participation).*

5. **What type of benefits do you think their participation could have and what relationship could this have with other areas of society?** *(Obtain information about whether the academic results of the students or coexistence have improved, if there have been changes in the environment, etc, in improving the life of the participants. Relate this to the area in which the interviewee works).*

6. **Does the school describe and justify the decisions it makes and the actions it carries out in the school to the community?** *(For example, if the school divides pupils into groups according to their abilities [streaming], do school representatives explain why this occurs and the results obtained from this. Or, for example, if heterogeneous groups are created, etc. Provide an example depending on what the school does). Does it explain why it does so and what the results of these practices are? Provide an example based on what is being done in the school.)*
7. **Do you think that the local government promotes/should promote this type of community involvement? In what way?**

Optional questions in order to include the dissemination of what is done in the school.

- *Do you think that there may be a connection between the participation of the community in these types of processes and the promotion of active citizenship?*
- *Has this type of participation contributed to the dissemination of what is carried out in the school? Has the image of the school changed?*

C. Community participation in the curriculum and in evaluation

8. **What do you think about the way/s that community participation is referred to in the school curriculum and in student evaluation?** *(Not only in reference to the official curriculum, but also to adaptations of it, the organisation of material in the classroom, learning support, etc.) If the interviewee knows this: How is the participation of these people organised/how should it be organised and how is it developed?*
9. **What benefits does/could community participation in the curriculum and in evaluation provide?** *(In relation to improvements in academic performance, coexistence, an increase in participation, etc.) If family or community members belonging to minorities (vulnerable groups) participate, what other benefits do they obtain in relation to other activities in society?*
10. **Do you think that local government promotes/should promote this type of community involvement? In what way?**

D. Participation in the pupil's learning activities

11. **In what type of learning activities do community members participate? Who participates and how do they do so?** *(In particular, what type of people participate, and what characteristics do they have? Are they family members, volunteers, etc.? Investigate what types of people participate, whether they belong to minorities, how they participate, in which activities? Bear in mind the inclusion of TIC and after school activities.)*
12. **What benefits from community participation are there/ would there be in these activities?** *(For example, when the community participates, do you think the class should be organised into homogeneous or heterogeneous groups? Should the opportunity be taken to remove children with different*

learning rhythms or levels from the classroom?) (Go further into the benefits provided by the participation of the community in relation to the other areas of society.. And if the people participating are immigrants or from cultural minorities, what are the specific benefits that this could provide?

13. Why do you think community members participate in these activities? What is the school doing/should the school do to increase community participation (*how is it organised*)? (If the interviewee participates, personalise this question).

14. Do you think that the local government promotes/should promote this type of community involvement? In what way?

E. Other forms of participation

15. What position (role) do you think the local government should take in relation to projects of this type which rely on community involvement in these activities?

16. Apart from the types of participation which have already been mentioned, what else could families and members of the community participate in? What benefits would that bring? (*In relation to academic results, coexistence, increased participation, and the school environment, etc.*)

F. Gender dimension

(If this aspect did not come up during the interview, a question about the relationship between community participation and combating gender stereotypes can be included here.)

17. Do you think that community participation, especially that of women (*Arab women, immigrant women, Roma mothers or grandmothers*) contributes towards overcoming gender stereotypes? (*Provide examples if possible.*)

Other women

18. What do women who have traditionally not participated, for example those with no education, participate in? (*Issues we have commented on previously: family education, participation in decision-making processes, in the curriculum, in evaluation and in learning activities.*) **What type of improvements can be observed?**

2008 Communicative open-ended interview: teachers

To be carried out with **3 teachers** or other staff in the school.

Objective of the interview: To collect and analyse the information provided by teachers to help identify the way in which the involvement of the community contributes to an improvement in success at school, in coexistence and in ensuring the success of the said involvement.

In this script, everything that appears in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the hypotheses derived from the 1st round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, and can be asked in joint reflection with teachers, if it is considered to be necessary and if there is an opportunity to extend the interview.

A. Family and community education

1. **Are there any forms of family education in your school? If so, who participates?** (*Is there any group of people that participates more than others? Who out of community participates the most?*)
What does it consist of? What type of activities does it involve? (*Obtain information about the types of family education carried out in the school*) **And how is it organised?** (*Who decides on the material? On what basis is the schedule planned? etc.*)
2. **Why do you think people participate in family education?** (*in relation to different strategies [for example dialogic and democratic] used at the school in order to obtain higher participation rates*)
Does the school take into account the families' needs? Describe. In what way do you think that this parental participation helps children's education?
3. **Since the family education courses began, have you observed any type of improvement in the school?** (*Especially in the academic performance of the students [in some subjects more than in others], in coexistence in the school, in the environment. Ask for possible improvement regarding work, living conditions, education, etc.*)

Optional question to clarify the two previous answers:

- *Since family education courses began, have you observed any type of improvement in the **academic results** of the pupils and in **school coexistence**? What type of improvement? (Better results in some subjects, more interest, fewer disagreements, less insults, more respect for different cultures, etc.)*
- *How are vulnerable groups (ethnic groups, people with disabilities, etc.) affected by family and community education with regard to academic achievements and the school environment?*
- *Have you observed any changes in the environment?*

B. Participation in school decision-making processes and accountability processes

4. **Which areas of the management and organisation of the school can the community participate in? Who participates?** *(Obtain information whether persons from ethnic and/or cultural minorities participate. Where this is the case, ask if they gain any specific benefits from their participation)* **What benefits do you think this participation brings?** *(Obtain information about whether academic results and peer relations have improved, if the school environment has changed, etc. If the person does not know or does not have this information, ask whether he/she believes it would change through increased participation.)*
5. **How is community participation in decision-making processes organised?** *(Ask about strategies [(for example dialogic and democratic] used at the school in order to increase participation rates): whether everyone is asked their opinion, whether a consensus is reached, validity of arguments regardless of status, etc.)* **Does the fact that it is organised in such a way affect participation success?** *(Does it increase, or not promote participation, etc.? Ask how could it be organised to improve and promote participation.)*

Optional question to include the dissemination activities carried out in the school.

- *Does this type of participation contribute to the dissemination of what is being done in the school? Has it changed the image of the school?*
6. **Does the school describe and justify the decisions it makes and the actions it carries out in the school to the community/parents?** *(For example, if the school divides pupils into groups according to their abilities [streaming], or creates heterogeneous groups, does it explain why it does so and what the results of these practices are? Provide an example based on what is being done in the school.)*
 7. **In what ways does the school communicate/collaborate with organisations in the community?**
 8. **How do you think that these programmes/activities have helped to include children and families of different cultures/religions/with special needs?** *(Ask the respondent to give you a specific example.)*

C. Community participation in the curriculum and in evaluation

9. **Does the community participate in the development of the curriculum in the school? Who participates?** *(Not only in reference to the official curriculum, but also to adaptations of the curriculum, the organisation of material in the classroom, learning support, etc.)* **Who participates in student evaluation? How has community participation changed over the past few years in frequency and in level of involvement? How are these changes related to the children's educational needs/problems?**

If the answer is yes: *How is the participation of these people organised and developed?*

If the answer is no: *Do you think that there should be participation in these areas?*

10. **What benefits does/could community participation in the curriculum and in evaluation provide?** *(In relation to improvements in academic performance, coexistence, transformation of community environment, etc.) Are there any family or community members belonging to minorities (vulnerable groups) who participate? What other benefits can they obtain from their participation?*
11. **Is this related to more inclusive practices? What type of practices?** *(For example, when community participation is involved in the development of the curriculum, is the curriculum adapted, are the classes divided into groups based on their learning level etc? Ask about what decisions are being made and how, especially with regard to vulnerable groups.)*
12. **How does the curriculum reflect the diversity which exists in the school?** *(Cultural minorities, people with disabilities, gender differences.) How is it ensured that the school reflects this diversity?*

Optional question in order to investigate the inclusion of democratic values in the school

- *On a daily basis, how are democratic values included into the curriculum, in what type of activities (promoting solidarity between classmates, teamwork, respect, etc.)?*

D. Participation in learning activities

13. **In what type of learning activities do community members participate? Who participate and how?** *(Especially, what types of people participate? Is there any characteristic that stands out? Are they family members, volunteers etc.? Investigate what type of people participates, whether they belong to minorities, how do they participate, in what activities? Have in mind the inclusion of ICT and after school activities.)*
14. **How are the activities inside the classroom organised if, for example, a community member participates?** *(For example, when is community participation taken into account? Are the classes organised into heterogeneous or homogeneous groups? Is there an opportunity to take the children out of the classroom based on their educational levels or learning rhythms? Investigate the benefits of community participation in the classroom in depth. In particular, focus on who participates and the characteristics of these people? Are they family members, volunteers, etc.?)*
15. **Why do you think community members participate in such activities? What is the school (teachers, organisation, etc. doing to increase community participation?** *(If necessary, personalise the question.)*

- 16. What benefits from community participation are there/ would there be in these activities?** (*Investigate the benefits that were obtained from community participation in the classroom, in school performance, in improvement in school coexistence, in opportunities for those who participate, etc. Especially, what types of person participate? Are there any common characteristics? Are there family members, volunteers, etc? What specific benefits can there be from participation of immigrants or people belonging to ethnic minorities?*)
- 17. When discussing participation in the learning process, what expectations do you have of the participation of family members?**

Optional question, to be asked in order to clarify the previous answers and issues which should have come out earlier during the interview.

- *Was any social advancement for any of the previous participants observed (in terms of jobs, education, social participation, etc.)*
- *Have there been any changes in the environment based on this participation? What type of changes? (In the pupil's life, in neighbourhood relations, etc.)*

E. Other forms of participation

- 18. Apart from the areas in which they are already participating, where else could community members participate? What benefits would that bring?** (*In relation to academic results, coexistence, increased participation, the school environment, etc.*)

F. Gender dimension

(If this aspect did not come up during the interview, a question about community participation and combating gender stereotypes can be included here.)

- 19. Do you think that community participation, especially that of women (Arab women, immigrant women, Roma mothers or grandmothers) contributes towards overcoming gender stereotypes?** (*Provide examples if possible.*)

Other women

- 20. What do women who have traditionally not participated, for example those with no education, participate in?** (*Issues we have commented on previously: family education, participation in decision-making processes, in the curriculum, in evaluation and in learning activities*). **What type of improvements can be observed?**

2009 Communicative open-ended interview: pupils

To be carried out with 7 pre-primary pupils.

Objective of the interview: Through a cooperative process between two people a consensual interpretation of reality is aimed for. Reflections are made of the interpretations which the student makes of his or her life, as well as what it means to him or her to participate in the local educational project which is being analysed.

In this script, everything that appears in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview, and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the questions proposed for the 3rd round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, in order to go into more depth concerning joint reflection with the person participating in the case study when considered necessary and if the interview time can be extended.

A. Connection between the implication of the community and the academic success of the pupils

In this section the objective is to find out if community participation/involvement has an influence on the academic success of the pupils. Taking the forms of participation identified in the 2nd round into account: Family and community education, the participation of the community in decision-making processes in schools, participation in the development of the curriculum and in evaluation, participation in classrooms and learning spaces, and other forms of participation. The daily life story will aim to go into more depth through the reflections and interpretations of the family members in relation to the way in which these forms of participation have a special impact on the academic results of the pupils.

1. Since family and community members have been coming to the school to learn/be educated, have you got better or have your classmates got better in any subject? *(Go into more depth whether they get better results, in any specific subject (languages, mathematics, IT), and whether they do their homework If pupil participation in the classroom has increased, if pupils have higher expectations, and more interest in studying, etc.)* **Would you be able to tell me whether since these people have been coming to the school to learn you have noticed any changes in your class? Could you give me an example of the changes?** *(Go into more depth about whether they know if student participation in classrooms has increased, if they have higher expectations and whether they have noticed whether the children are more interested in studying and going to school, and whether they do their homework, etc.)*

2. Since people from your family and other people from the neighbourhood have been making decisions about the school and having responsibilities there, have you or your classmates got better in any subjects? *(Go into more depth about whether they get better results, and in any specific subject, e.g. languages, mathematics, English, IT.)* **Could you give me a specific example of a subject you or your classmates have got better in?** *(Go into more depth about whether they know if student participation in classrooms has increased, if they have higher expectations and whether they have noticed whether the children are more interested in studying and going to school, and whether they do their homework, etc.)*

3. Since families and other people from your neighbourhood have started to make decisions about what you learn in class and how you learn it, have you or your classmates got better in any subject? *(Go into more depth about whether they get better results, and in any specific subject, e.g. languages, mathematics, English, IT, and whether they do their homework. If pupil participation in class has increased, then ask if pupils have higher expectations and more interest in studying and coming to school, etc.)*

4. Since families and other people from your neighbourhood have been able to come into classrooms to help you, have you or your classmates got better in any subject? *(Go into more depth about whether they get better results, if they do their homework. If pupil participation in the classroom has increased, ask if pupils have higher expectations, and more interest in studying and in going to school, etc.)*

5. Can you think of anything else that families and people from your neighbourhood could do in the school or anything else they could participate in so that you get better grades? What do they do? Can you give me an example?

6. Thinking about what we have already talked about *(remind them of the types of participation if necessary)*, **do you think that there are any types of family or community participation which have made more of a difference to your grades than other types? Which types? Could you give me a specific example of this?**

B. Community participation leads to improvements in different areas.

In this section the aim is to identify the improvements generated by community participation and involvement. The objective is to look at the way in which the participation/involvement of the community generates improvements in various areas or fields: in living and working together at school, in gender violence prevention, intercultural living together and vulnerable groups,³ in improving the personal and working lives of the participants, in improving the pupil's school and neighbourhood environment, and in overcoming gender stereotypes.

7. Could you tell me how being and working together at school improves when your family and other people from the neighbourhood come to the school? Could you give me an example of this? *(Whether by improving performance/learning rhythm and the school atmosphere, conflicts have been reduced. Are there better relationships between the students inside and outside the classroom (in the playground)? Are students more cooperative and have a greater degree of solidarity? Has the teaching-learning atmosphere changed?)*

8. Could you tell me if since families and other people from the neighbourhood have started coming into the school, being and working together has improved for students from other countries/cultures or students with disabilities? For example, have you noticed that those students are now being included more? Why? Could you give me a specific example? *(Personalise the question if the participant belongs to an ethnic minority or is an immigrant or a member of a vulnerable group. Go into more depth about whether there are new values, greater solidarity and equality amongst the students who belong to these minority groups and the rest of the students, overcoming racial prejudices. Find out if possible conflict and prejudices against them have diminished.)*

9. I'm sure you probably know that sometimes at school some of the boys are violent to the girls, making you feel unhappy or uncomfortable. For example (in primary school) the girls sometimes complain that the boys lift up their skirts or touch their bottoms. (In secondary school) gender violence can sometimes be seen more clearly amongst the boys and girls who start to go out with each other or who kiss each other. Sometimes they don't treat each other very well. **Thinking about that, maybe you could tell me about a situation like this and how families and other people from the neighbourhood act when these things happen at school? Do you think it's important that families and people from the neighbourhood do something to stop these situations?** For example, it might be easier to describe a situation like that to a volunteer closer in age to yourself, than to a teacher. **Do the teachers or other people in the school talk to you about how to act, where to go and who to go to when these violent situations happen to girls at school? Is there any example you could give me?**

³ Cultural minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, women, young people.

10. Could you tell me if the lives of the families and other people from the neighbourhood who come into the school have got better? Could give me a specific example of this? *(Ask about specific improvements such as whether their professional and personal opportunities have improved, as well as access to professional fields and housing, and whether self-esteem has improved.)*

11. Have you or your classmates noticed that living together in the neighbourhood and in families has got better? What have you noticed? Could you tell me about an experience you or your classmates had? *(Ask if family relationships have improved in families with different origins. Find out whether the school has an improved image in the neighbourhood and whether families and the community are more satisfied. Ask if family members help the children with their homework.)*

12. How do you and your classmates feel in class when other ladies who are not teachers (especially Arab women, immigrants, Roma women and people from other cultures) come into the class to help you? Could you tell me how you felt on a specific day? Could you give me an example? *(Go into more depth about whether there are new values, greater solidarity and equality amongst pupils who belong to these minority groups and the rest of the students, overcoming racial prejudices. Could you give me a specific example of the way in which the image of these women has changed since they started to participate in school activities.)*

13. Finally, as well as the improvements we have talked about, can you think of another aspect/thing that you would like to improve in the school? Could you explain it to me with an example?

C. Dialogic and democratic strategies which facilitate community involvement.

In this section the objective is to identify the strategies which lead to this type of participation, and which are effective and have a real impact on the participant's reality.

14. Could you tell me what the school does to make it easier for families and people from the neighbourhood to come into the school? Could you maybe give me a specific example of anything your school has done to help families and people from the neighbourhood to participate?

15. What do you think the school could do to help more families participate in the school? Could you suggest some ways that things might go? *(Go into more depth about whether there are dialogic and democratic strategies which allow everyone to participate equally. For example: whether everyone's opinion is asked, whether decisions are consensual, and whether arguments are seen as valid independently of status, etc.)*

More specifically:

- a. *In what way does the school take the voices/opinions of all of the participants into account? Could you tell me how this influences family involvement in the school? Do you have any specific example you could give to explain it to me?*
- b. *What does the school do to include families and the community in school life, and into making important decisions? Can you give me an example?*
- c. *How are families talked to here? In what way is it communicated that they are a part of the school and how are they encouraged to participate? Could you give some examples?*
- d. *How do the teachers communicate to families that the school has high expectations of their abilities?*

16. What do you think the school could do to increase this participation? What specific actions are needed to improve or promote participation? Could you give some examples? *(Go into more depth about how to increase this type of participation, increase interest, and encourage participation, etc. Ask what could be done to improve and promote participation.)*

2009 Communicative open-ended interview: organisation representatives

To be carried out with 5 community organisation representatives who are involved in the school.

Objective of the interview: **To collect and analyse the information provided by organisation representatives. The aim here is to identify the connection between community involvement and academic success along with other improvements in other areas, as well as the strategies which promote and encourage community participation.**

In this script, everything that appears in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview, and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the questions proposed for the 3rd round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, in order to go into more depth in joint reflection with the person participating in the case study. They should be used if considered necessary and if the interview time can be extended.

A. The connection between the community and the pupil's academic success

1. **In what way does your entity/organisation participate in family and community education? In what way do you think that family and community education has an impact on the academic success of pupils? Could you give me an example of this?** *(Go into more depth about whether they get better results and if they do their homework. If student participation in the classroom has increased, does this reflect higher expectations, and more interest in studying, etc.?)*
2. **Would you be able to tell me in what way community participation in the school's decision-making processes has promoted the academic success of pupils? Do you have any experiences that could explain this? Could you tell me about how your organisation participates in decision making in the school? Could you give me an example to illustrate this? In what way do you think this participation influences the academic success of pupils?**
3. **In what way is your organisation involved in the development/setting out of the curriculum and evaluation? How might this participation influence the academic success of pupils? Could give me a clear example of this?**
4. **Do you think that the participation of families, volunteers and other people from the community in the classrooms, improves the academic results of the students? How was this improvement made possible? Could you specify this by telling me something about what you have done or have been part of it?** *(Find out if people from your organisation or from the school environment participate in classrooms and how this affects pupils' results.)*
5. **Apart from the forms of community participation/involvement which we have discussed, are there any other forms of community involvement which occur to you which have also influenced the academic success of pupils? Could you explain this with an example?** *(Go into more depth about any type of participation which suggests that the community has an impact on improving student's academic results.)*

6. Of the forms of community participation we have so far mentioned, which one do you think influences academic results and pupils' academic success most? Could you give me an example of this?

B. Community participation leads to improvements in different areas.

7. Could you tell me how community involvement influences improvement in the overall school environment? In what ways has the involvement of your organisation in the school improved the school environment? Could you give me an example of this? *(Find out if the participation of members of the organisation as mediators, monitors, volunteers, etc has improved the atmosphere in the school/neighbourhood/in the families, and if there are now better relationships between the students.)*
8. In what ways do you think the involvement of the community leads to an improvement in the intercultural life of the school? How, for example, does the participation of people from different cultures influence the inclusion of pupils belonging to ethnic minorities/immigrant groups/pupils with disabilities? Could you give an example? How does this influence the atmosphere amongst pupils? Have you observed any changes? *(Go into more depth about whether there are new values, greater solidarity and equality amongst the students who belong to these minority groups and the rest of the pupils, overcoming racial prejudices. Find out if the conflict and prejudices against them diminished.)*
9. Occasionally there are situations involving gender violence in schools. *For example, in primary schools girls are sometimes subject to harassment from their male classmates, such as skirt lifting or inappropriate touching. In secondary school gender violence is more explicit and may occur as a result of sexual relationships. On some occasions it has been shown that community participation/involvement prevents gender violence in schools. In what ways do you think that community participation could have prevented these situations? Can you give me an example of this? It is, for example, easier to explain situations like this to a volunteer closer in age to themselves than to a teacher. Could you describe a situation like this to me and how people acted in that situation? Taking into account what we have just said, could you tell me how community involvement leads to or could lead to the prevention of gender violence in this school? Perhaps you could tell me about a situation which took place in the past and whether community involvement contributed to the identification and prevention of these conflicts in the school. If situations of this type have already taken place, can you tell me how they were resolved in a positive and efficient way?*
10. Can you tell me in what way community and family involvement has improved the lives of the participants? Do you remember any specific situation of improvement in the participants' lives? Can you give an example? *Ask about specific improvements such as whether their professional and personal opportunities have improved, as well as access to professional fields and housing, and whether self-esteem has improved.*

11. **Could you tell me how community involvement influences the improvement in living together in the neighbourhood and in the family environment? Could you give me an example of these improvements? Could you, for example, tell me about how these environments have improved since families and the community have become involved?** *(Ask if family relationships have improved in families of different origins. Find out whether the school has an improved image in the neighbourhood and whether families and the community are more satisfied., Ask, for example, if family members help the children with their homework. Ask for experiences about the improvement.)*
12. **In what ways does the involvement of women and especially of Arab women, immigrants, Roma women and women of other ethnicities contribute towards overcoming gender stereotypes? Could you give me an example of overcoming gender stereotypes since these women have participated in the school? Could you give me a specific example of the way in which the image of these women has changed since they started to participate?**
13. **Finally, can community participation lead to any other improvements apart from those we have discussed? Is there any example you could share with me about this?**

C. Dialogic and democratic strategies which facilitate community involvement.

14. **Could you tell me what the school does to promote and encourage family and community involvement in the school? Could you give me a specific example of any actions that have been carried out and which have encouraged family and community participation?**
15. **What do you think the school could do to promote and encourage more family participation in the school? Do you remember any experiences that illustrate this?** *(Go into more depth about whether there are dialogic and democratic strategies which allow everyone to participate equally. For example: whether everyone's opinion is asked, whether decisions are consensual, and whether arguments are seen as valid independently of status, etc.)*

More specifically:

- a. *In what ways does the school take the voices/opinions of all of the participants into account? Could you tell me how this influences family involvement in the school? Can you give some specific examples of this? What does the school do to include families and the community in school life and making important decisions?*
 - b. *How are families talked to here? In what way is it communicated that they are a part of the school and how are they encouraged to participate?*
 - c. *How do the teachers communicate to families the fact that this school expects them to participate? Do you have any examples to illustrate this?*
16. **If you had to increase community participation/involvement, how would you go about it, or how would you improve this involvement? Could you explain this with some examples?** *(Go into more depth about how to increase this type of participation, increase interest, and how to encourage participation, etc. Ask what could be done to improve and promote participation.)*

2009 Communicative open-ended interview: families

To be carried out with 6 family members of primary school students.

Objective of the interview: Through a cooperative process between two people a consensual interpretation of reality is aimed at. Reflections are made of the interpretations which families make of their lives, as well as what it means to participate in the local educational project which is being analysed.

In this script, everything that appears in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview, and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the questions proposed for the 3rd round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, in order to go into more depth about joint reflection with the interviewee. They should be used if considered necessary and if the interview time can be extended.

A. The connection between the community and pupils' academic success

In this section the objective is to find out if community participation/involvement has an influence on the academic success of pupils. The forms of participation identified in the 2nd round which are taken into account are : family and community education, the participation of the community in decision-making processes in schools, participation in the development of the curriculum and in evaluation, participation in classrooms and learning spaces, and other forms of participation. Investigating daily life stories aims to go into more depth through the reflections and interpretations of family members on the ways in which forms of participation have a special impact on pupils' academic results.

1. Since family and community members have begun to participate in the school to learn/be educated, how has the academic performance of pupils improved? Could you tell me how family and community education influences the academic success of pupils? Could you give me an example of this? *(Go into more depth on the question and personalise it if the interviewee's son/daughter, grandson/granddaughter (or of other relation) gets better grades, if the pupils have improved in any specific subject, e.g. languages, mathematics, IT, and whether their homework is done. Ask if they know whether pupil participation in classrooms has increased, whether they have higher expectations, and whether the interviewee has noticed whether they are more interested in studying, etc.)*

2. Would you be able to tell me in what way community participation in the school's decision-making processes has promoted pupils' academic success? Could you give me any example of the way in which this participation influences the student's academic results? *Personalise the question with reference to the academic results of their son/daughter (or of another relation).*

3. When family and community members participate/are involved in the development/setting out of the curriculum and in evaluation, could you tell me if this type of participation influences the pupils' academic results? How? Is there an example you could give me? *(Personalise the question by discussing the academic results of their son/daughter (or of another relation). Could you give me a clear example of this? Go into more depth about whether they get better results, and whether they do their homework. If pupil participation in the classroom has increased, ask whether the pupils have higher expectations, and are more interested in studying, etc.*

4. Could you tell me if the student's academic results have improved since family members, volunteers and other people from the community have begun to participate in the classrooms? How was this improvement

possible? Can you give me an example concerning your own son/daughter or any of their classmates? *Personalise the question in relation to the academic results of the interviewee's son/daughter (or other relative).*

5. Apart from the forms of community participation/involvement which we have discussed, are there any other forms of community involvement which occur to you which have also influenced the academic success of pupils? Can you specify this in a clear example? Go into more depth concerning any types of participation which suggest that the community has an impact on improving pupil's academic results.

6. Of the forms of community participation we have mentioned so far, do you think that there are any forms of community participation/involvement which have a bigger impact than others on pupil's academic results and academic success? Could you give me an example of this?

B. Community participation leads to improvements in different areas.

In this section the aim is to identify the improvements generated by community participation and involvement. The objective is to look at the way in which the participation/involvement of the community generates improvements in various areas or fields: in the social environment of the school, in gender violence prevention, in intercultural intercommunication, in vulnerable groups,⁴ in the improvement in the personal and working lives of the participants, in improving the pupil's environment and in the neighbourhood, as well as in overcoming gender stereotypes.

7. Could you tell me about the way in which family and community participation has improved the school social environment? Could you tell me about how the school environment has improved since families and the community have become involved? Whether by improving performance/working rhythms and the school atmosphere, conflicts have been reduced; whether there are better relationships between the pupils inside and outside the classroom (e.g. in the playground); whether the pupils are more cooperative and show greater solidarity; whether the teaching-learning atmosphere has changed. Could you give me an example of this? Personalise the question by referring to the academic results of the interviewee's son/daughter (or of other relative).

8. In what way do you think the involvement of the community leads to an improvement in the intercultural life of the school? How, for example, does the participation of people from different cultures influence the inclusion of students belonging to ethnic minorities/immigrants/students with disabilities? How does this influence the atmosphere amongst the students? How have you noticed it in daily life in the school? Could you give an example of this? (Go into more depth about whether there are new values, greater solidarity and equality amongst the students who belong to these minority groups and the rest of the pupils, overcoming racial prejudices. Find out if the conflict and prejudices against them have diminished.)
Personalise the question if the participant belongs to an ethnic minority, or is an immigrant or a member of a vulnerable group.

9. I'm not sure if you're aware of the fact that occasionally there are situations involving gender violence in schools. For example, in primary schools girls are sometimes subject to harassment from their male classmates, such as skirt lifting or inappropriate touching. In secondary school gender violence is more explicit and may result from sexual relationships. On some occasions it has been shown that community participation/involvement prevents gender violence in schools. As a family member, in what way do you think that family/community participation could prevent these situations? It is, for example, easier to explain such situations to a volunteer who is closer in age to the children themselves than to a teacher. Could you describe a situation like this to me and how people acted in that situation? Taking into account what we have just said, could you tell me how community involvement leads to or could lead to the prevention of gender violence in

⁴ Cultural minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, women, young people.

this school? *Could you tell me about a situation which took place in the past? Did community involvement contribute to the identification and prevention of these conflicts in the school? If situations of this type have taken place, can you tell me how they were resolved in a positive and efficient way?*

10. Could you tell me in what way community and family involvement has improved the lives of the participants? Could you specify this with an example? *Ask about specific improvements such as whether their professional and personal opportunities have improved, as well as access to professional fields and housing, and whether self-esteem has improved.*

11. Could you tell me how community involvement influences the improvement in living together in the neighbourhood and in the family environment? Could you give me an example of this that you and your family have experienced? *Ask if family relationships have improved in families from different origins. Find out whether the school now has an improved image in the neighbourhood and whether families and the community are more satisfied. Ask, for example, if the family members help the children with their homework. Personalise the question by discussing the academic results of their son/daughter (or of another relative).*

12. In what way does the involvement of women and especially of Arab women, immigrants, Roma women and women of other ethnicities contribute towards overcoming gender stereotypes? Could you give me a specific example of the way in which the image of these women has changed since they started to participate in school life? *Personalise the question if the participant belongs to an ethnic minority, or is an immigrant or a member of a vulnerable group.*

13. Finally, can community participation lead to any other improvements apart from those we have discussed? Could you tell me about an experience you have had to illustrate this.

C. Dialogic and democratic strategies which facilitate community involvement.

In this section the objective is to identify the strategies which lead to this type of participation and which are effective and have a real impact on the participant's reality.

14. Could you tell me what the school does to promote and encourage family and community involvement in the school? Could you give me a specific example of any actions that have been carried out which have encouraged family and community participation?

15. What do you think the school could do to promote and encourage more family participation in the school? Could you give me an example of this? *Go into more -depth about whether there are dialogic and democratic strategies which allow everyone to participate equally. For example: whether everyone's opinion is asked, whether decisions are consensual, and whether arguments are seen as valid independently of status, etc.*

More specifically:

- a. *In what ways does the school take the voices/opinions of all of the participants into account? Could you tell me how this influences family involvement in the school? How have you noticed this in your daily life? Could you give me an example?*
- b. *What does the school do to include families and the community in school life, including making important decisions? Could you tell me about a specific experience you have had?*
- c. *How are families talked to at the school? In what way is it communicated that they are a part of the school and how are they encouraged to participate? Could you give an example of this?*

- d. *How do the teachers communicate to families that this school expects their participation? Could you tell me your experiences of this? Do you have any examples to illustrate this?*

16. If you had to increase community participation/involvement, can you think of any way to do this? For example, what could you do, or what could the school do in order for there to be greater interest in participating? Ask about the way in which things could be arranged to improve and promote participation.

2009 Communicative open-ended interview: administration representatives

To be carried out with 5 administration representatives who work in different areas of society.

Objective of the interview: **To collect and analyse the information provided by administration representatives. The aim is to identify the connection between community involvement and academic success along with other improvements in other areas, as well as the strategies which promote and encourage community participation.**

In this script, everything that appears in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview, and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the questions proposed for the 3rd round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, in order to go into more depth concerning joint reflection with the person participating in the case study. They should be used if considered necessary and if the interview time can be extended.

A. The connection between the community and pupils' academic success

1. **How does the administration participate in family and community education? In what ways do you think family and community education influence pupils' academic success? Since community members have been attending the school to learn/be educated, in what ways do you think pupils' academic performance has improved? Could you give me an example of this?** *Go into more depth about whether they get better results, and whether they do their homework. Has pupil participation in the classroom increased? Do pupils have higher expectations, and more interest in studying, etc.?*
2. **Could you tell me in what way community participation in the school's decision-making processes has promoted pupils' academic success? Could you tell me about how your administration participates in the school's decision-making? How do you think that their participation influences pupils' academic success?**
3. **In what ways is your administration involved in the development of the curriculum and in evaluation? How do you think that this participation influences pupils' academic results? Could you give me an example of this?** *Go into more depth about whether they get better results and whether they do their homework. Has student participation in the classroom increased? Do pupils now have higher expectations, and more interest in studying, etc.? Personalise the question on academic results according to the subject the interviewee teaches.*
4. **Do you think that the participation of families, volunteers and other people from the community in classrooms, improves pupils' academic results? How is this improvement achieved? Do you personally have experiences about this?**
5. **Apart from the forms of community participation/involvement which we have discussed, are there any other forms of community involvement which occur to you which have also influenced pupils' academic?** *Go into more depth about any type of participation which shows that the community has had an impact in improving pupils' academic results*

6. **Of the forms of community participation we have mentioned so far, which do you think have influenced the academic results and the academic success of pupils most? Could you give me an example of this?**

B. Community participation leads to improvements in different areas.

7. **Could you tell me how community involvement has had an influence in improving the social environment of the school? In what ways has administrative involvement improved the social environment of the school? Could you give me an example of this?** *By improving performance/rhythm and the school atmosphere, have conflicts been reduced? Have relationships between pupils inside and outside the classroom (e.g. in the playground) improved? Are pupils more cooperative and show greater solidarity? Has the teaching-learning atmosphere changed?*
8. **In what ways do you think the involvement of the community leads to an improvement in the intercultural life of the school? How, for example, does the participation of people from different cultures influence the inclusion of pupils belonging to ethnic minorities/immigrant groups/students with disabilities? How does this influence the atmosphere amongst the pupils? Do you have any personal experiences of this?** *Go into more depth into whether there are new values, more solidarity and equality amongst the students who belong to these minority groups and the rest of the students, overcoming racist prejudices. Find out if the conflict between them and prejudices against them have been reduced with examples.*
9. **Occasionally there are situations involving gender violence in schools. For example, in primary schools girls are sometimes subject to harassment from their male classmates, such as skirt lifting or inappropriate touching. In secondary school gender violence is more explicit and may occur as a result of sexual relationships. On some occasions it has been shown that community participation/involvement prevents gender violence in schools. In what ways do you think community participation could prevent these situations?** *It is, for example, easier to explain a situations like this to a volunteer closer in age to themselves than to a teacher. Could you describe a situation like this and tell me how people acted in this situation? Taking into account what we have just said, could you be tell me how community involvement leads to or could lead to the prevention of gender violence in this school? Could you could tell me about a situation which took place in the past and whether community involvement contributed to the identification and prevention of these conflicts in the school? If situations of this type have taken place, can you tell me how they were resolved in a positive and efficient way?*
10. **Could you tell me in what way community and family involvement has improved the lives of the participants? Could you give me an example to illustrate this?** *Ask about specific improvements such as whether their professional and personal opportunities have improved, as well as access to professional fields and housing, and whether self-esteem has improved.*
11. **Could you tell me how community involvement influences the social environment of the neighbourhood and the family environment? Could you give me an example of these improvements?**

Could you, for example, tell me about how these environments have improved since families and the community have become involved? *Ask if family relationships have improved in families from different origins. Find out whether the school's image in the neighbourhood has improved and whether families and the community are more satisfied. Ask, for example, if family members help the children with their homework.*

- 12. In what way does the involvement of women and especially of Arab women, immigrants, Roma women and women of other ethnicities contribute towards overcoming gender stereotypes?**

Could give me a specific example of the way in which the image of these women has changed since they started to participate in community activities.

- 13. Finally, can community participation lead to any other improvements apart from those we have discussed? Could you give an example of this?** *Ask about their experiences and identify improvements that have taken place.*

C. Dialogic and democratic strategies which facilitate community involvement.

- 14. Could you tell me what the school does to promote and encourage family and community involvement in the school? Could you give me a specific example of any actions that have been carried out and which have encouraged family and community participation?**

- 15. What do you think the school could do to promote and encourage more family participation in the school? Could you give me a specific example to illustrate this?** *Go into more depth about whether there are dialogic and democratic strategies which allow everyone to participate equally. For example: whether everyone's opinion is asked, whether decisions are consensual, and whether arguments are seen as valid independently of status, etc.*

More specifically:

- a. In what way does the school take the voices/opinions of all of the participants into account? Could you tell me how this influences family involvement in the school? Could you give me some specific examples ?*
- b. What does the school do to include families and the community in school life, including making important decisions?*
- c. How are families talked to at the school? In what way is it communicated that they are a part of the school and how are they encouraged to participate?*
- d. How do the teachers communicate to families that this school expects their participation? Do you have any examples to illustrate this?*

- 16. If you had to increase community participation/involvement, how would you do this, or how would you improve this involvement? Could you give me some specific examples of this?** *Go into more depth about how to increase this type of participation, how to increase interest, and how to encourage participation, etc. Ask what could be done to improve and promote participation.*

2009 Communicative open-ended interview: teachers

To be carried out with 3 teachers who work in the school.

Objectives of the interview: To collect and analyse the information provided by the teachers. The aim is to identify the connection between community involvement and academic success along with other improvements in other areas, as well as the strategies which promote and encourage community participation.

In this script, everything that appears in **bold** is related to key questions which should be asked at some point during the interview, and which correspond to the 13 indicators provided in Annex I and with the questions proposed for the 3rd round.

The questions in *italics* are meant to be used as a guide only, in order to go into more depth concerning joint reflection with the person participating in the case study. They should be used if considered necessary and if the interview time can be extended.

A. The connection between the community and pupils' academic success

1. **Do you think that family and community education has an impact on pupils' academic success?**
Since the community has started attending the school to learn/be educated, has the academic performance of pupils improved? Could you give me an example of this? Go into more depth about whether they get better results and whether they do their homework. Has pupil participation in the classroom increased? Do the pupils have higher expectations and greater interest in studying, etc.?
2. **Could you tell me in what ways community participation in the school's decision-making processes has promoted pupils' academic success? Could you give me an example of the way in which this participation influences the pupils' academic results?** *Personalise the question on academic results according to the subject the interviewee teaches.*
3. **Does the participation of the community in the development of the curriculum and evaluation lead to the pupils' academic success? How does this participation influence the pupils' academic results? Could you give an example of this?** *Go into more depth about whether they get better results, and whether they do their homework. Has student participation in the classroom increased? Do pupils have higher expectations and greater interest in studying, etc.? Personalise the question on academic results according to the subject the interviewee teaches.*
4. **Could you tell me if the pupil's academic results have improved since family members, volunteers and other people from the community began to participate in the classrooms? How was this improvement brought about? Could you tell me about something that happened to you in any of your classes or in the school that would explain this?**
5. **Apart from the forms of community participation/involvement which we have discussed, are there any other forms of community involvement which occur to you which have also influenced the pupils' academic? Could you give a specific example?** *Go into more depth about any*

type of participation which shows that the community has had an impact on improving pupils' academic results.

6. **Of the forms of community participation we have mentioned so far, do you think that there are any forms of community participation/involvement which have a bigger impact than others on pupil's academic results and academic success? Could you give me an example of this?** *Personalise the question on academic results according to the subject the interviewee teaches.*

B. Community participation leads to improvements in different areas.

7. **Could you tell me how community involvement has a positive effect on the school social environment? How has the school social environment improved since families and the community became involved? Could you give me an example of this?** *By improving performance/rhythm and the school atmosphere have conflicts been reduced? Are there better relationships between the pupils inside and outside the classroom (e.g. in the playground)? Are pupils more cooperative and show greater solidarity? Has the teaching-learning atmosphere changed?*
8. **In what ways has the involvement of the community led to an improvement in the intercultural life of the school? How, for example, does the participation of people from different cultures influence the inclusion of pupils belonging to ethnic minorities/immigrant groups/students with disabilities? Could you give an example of this? How does participation influence the atmosphere amongst the pupils?** *Go into more depth about whether there are new values. Is there greater solidarity and equality amongst the students who belong to these minority groups and the rest of the students, thus overcoming racial prejudices?*
9. *Find out if the conflict and prejudices against them have been reduced.*
10. **Occasionally there are situations involving gender violence in schools. For example, in primary schools girls are sometimes subject to harassment from their male classmates, such as skirt lifting or inappropriate touching. In secondary school gender violence is more explicit and may occur as a result of sexual relationships. On some occasions it has been shown that community participation/involvement prevents gender violence in schools. In what ways do you think that community participation could prevent these situations? Can you give me an example of this?** *In some cases it is easier to explain situations like this to a volunteer closer in age to the children themselves than to a teacher. Could you describe a situation like this to me and how people acted in that situation? Taking into account what we have just said, could you tell me how community involvement leads to or could lead to the prevention of gender violence in this school? Perhaps you could tell me about a situation which took place in the past and whether community involvement contributed to the identification and prevention of these conflicts in the school. If situations of this type have taken place, can you tell me how they were resolved in a positive and efficient way?*
11. **Could you tell me in what way community and family involvement has improved the lives of the participants? Do you remember any specific situations involving improvement in the participants' lives? Could you give an example?** *Ask about specific improvements such as whether*

their professional and personal opportunities have improved. Has access to professional fields and housing improved? Has self-esteem improve?

12. **Could you tell me how community involvement improves the social environment of the neighbourhood and the family environment? Could you give me an example of these improvements? Could you, for example, tell me how these environments have improved since families and the community have become more involved? Ask if family relationships have improved in families from different origins. Find out whether the school's image in the neighbourhood has improved and whether families and the community are more satisfied. Ask, for example, whether family members help the children with their homework.**
13. **In what ways does the involvement of women and especially of Arab women, immigrants, Roma women and women of other ethnicities contribute towards overcoming gender stereotypes? Could you give me any example of overcoming gender stereotypes since these women have participated at the school? Could you give me a specific example of the way in which the image of these women has changed since they started to participate in school activities.**
14. **Finally, can community participation lead to any other improvements apart from those we have discussed? Is there any example you can share with me about this?**

C. Dialogic and democratic strategies which facilitate community involvement.

15. **Could you tell me what the school does to promote and encourage family and community involvement in the school? Could you give me a specific example of any actions that have been carried out and which have encouraged family and community participation?**
16. **What do you think the school could do to promote and encourage more family participation in the school? Could you give me an example to illustrate this? Go into more depth about whether there are dialogic and democratic strategies which allow people to participate equally. For example: whether everyone's opinion is asked, whether decisions are consensual, and whether arguments are seen as valid independently of status, etc.**

More specifically:

- a. *In what ways does the school take the voices/opinions of all of the participants into account? Could you tell me how this influences family involvement in the school?*
- b. *What does the school do to include families and the community in school life, including making important decisions?*
- c. *How are families talked to at the school? In what way is it communicated that they are a part of the school and how are they encouraged to participate?*
- d. *How do the teachers communicate to families that this school expects their participation? Could you give me an example?*

- 17. If you had to increase community participation/involvement, how would you do this, or how would you improve involvement? Could you give me an example***Go into more depth about how this type of participation could be increased. How could interest be increased? How could participation be encouraged, etc.? Ask what could be done to improve and promote participation.*

APPENDIX 2.

Projects at the research pre-primary school

MONIKU - support for multicultural children

This project unites the municipalities of the greater Helsinki metropolitan area (Vantaa, Espoo, Helsinki and Kauniainen) and aims to develop at pre-primary school and in everyday life practical methods to support children and parents who have a multicultural background. The staff at 21 pre-primary schools participating in the project are reflecting on and evaluating their own work practices and developing new methods to help multicultural children and parents. The project aims to improve the professional skills of staff and their awareness of the special support needed for multicultural children. This involves, for example, helping these children learn Finnish as a second language as well as supporting their cultural identity and mother tongue.

An understanding of different cultures increases the ability of staff to communicate and co-operate with parents and children and share mutual respect and understanding. An essential element of a child's well-being is to develop a mutual and committed partnership between staff and parents, so that parents have an opportunity to participate in all matters concerning their child.

The case-study pre-primary school in this research is one of the 21 pre-primary school which participated in this project. The project started at the beginning of 2004 and ended in December 2007. Financial aid for the project came from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and from municipalities within the greater Helsinki metropolitan area.

YAD - support programme for leisure time

The YAD (Youth against Drugs) Association started a new project at the beginning of 2002. This was an extension of the previous project carried out in 1999–2001. The new project took four years and aimed to complete the previous development work and thereby create a regional strategic plan and a programme for children and young people. RAY (Finland's Slot Machine Association) was responsible for financing the project. The primary target group was children and young people who needed support for their social skills and who did not have previous regular leisure activities or hobbies. The project was carried out by the local actors of each neighbourhood. The preventive work progressed in three stages.

The first stage was a measurement of children's social skills through a survey filled in by teachers and a self-evaluation form filled in by children. The survey was divided into two categories of abnormal behaviour – overly-active children and overly-passive children. Children behaving over-actively often have difficulties in concentrating when working in a group. They may disturb other children's studying and act extrovertly. Children behaving over-passively create few difficulties for the teacher. They act quietly and are well behaved when working in a group, but their problems lie elsewhere. This kind of withdrawn child might be called quiet but the dominant trait may well not be shyness. Passive children are often without friends as it is difficult for them to make contact with other children, especially those their own age.

In the survey, teachers marked the name of the school, the grade, the number of children who fitted into the two abnormal categories and the total number of pupils. Children who needed social support were on average 10–15% of the total. The basic idea of categorising charting was problem-based but its objective was to act positively to respond to children's real needs without stigmatising them as 'problem children'.

In addition to the survey of social skills made by teachers since 2004, a self-evaluation form was filled in by children. This related to the child's interpretation of his/her own social skills and situa-

tions. The self-evaluation gave good additional information about the children's social skills. This form of self-assessment also strengthened the children's autonomy.

The second stage was an examination of the service system and target group. Teachers asked children what kind of regular hobbies they had. They also asked about school subjects and other interests, as well as a lack of interests or the reason why a child gave up a hobby. The results were then examined by the pupil welfare group at the school or pre-primary school. Outside the pupil welfare group, the children's names were kept secret. However, mentioning the names in this case is important in order to focus on the appropriate needs for a particular child.

The examination brought out the need to arrange new functions and methods for helping and encouraging the children's growth and development. It was also noticed that on average half of the children who needed support in social skills were not involved in any regular leisure activity. Quiet and withdrawn children in particular lacked hobbies. The need to strengthen children's social skills varied greatly. Some children needed a large-scale service network to help them, and some were satisfied with the opportunity to take an interest in a meaningful activity.

The third stage was the creation of the regional strategic plan. This was made by collecting information together and by trying to respond to the needs that arose. As a result, for every child the project arranged an opportunity to participate in an activity that supported social skills.

Evaluation of School Readiness

School Readiness Evaluation included three stages: the first stage was observations carried out constantly in everyday situations by teachers; the second stage was to identify those children who needed to be examined and evaluated in a group, and the third stage was the actual individual evaluation of those children. School Readiness Evaluation is a multi-professional approach and parents play a significant role.

At the research pre-primary school, the School Readiness Evaluation system is used in pre-primary education in order to support learning opportunities and prevent learning difficulties when children transfer from pre-primary school to primary school. The pre-primary school started to use this learning evaluation method in 2003.

APPENDIX 3.
Predetermined selective categories 2008

	Types of participation and community involvement							Improvements which are due to community involvement							Different dialogic and democratic strategies facilitate the involvement of the community:				
	Family educationnn	Decision-making processes	Curriculum and evaluation	Classrooms and learning spaces	Promotion of inclusive practices	Others		Academic results	school coexistence	The participants' opportunities	Transformation of the environment	overcoming gender stereotypes	Others	Inclusion of all the voices	Participation in decisions and having	Egalitarian dialogue	High expectations of the families'	Others	
Exclusionary quotat. numb.	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	33		
	33	37	29	25	33	8	1	2	10	5	4	1	2	2	2	0	0		
Transformative quotat. numb.	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34		
	65	68	41	6	102	8	12	17	25	10	37	0	21	10	11	4	0		

